

Ecuadorian president held at base

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (R) — Ecuadorian President Leon Febres Cordero was seized at an air force base close to this port city Friday after a burst of gunfire which wounded eight people, local radio reports said. Radio Sucre said the president was seized shortly after arriving at the air base of Taura, 25 kilometres south east of Guayaquil, to receive a military award. The radio said eight people were wounded when an unidentified person opened fire with a machine-gun during the award ceremony. It said Febres Cordero, a tough right-winger who has ruled Ecuador since August 1984, dived to the floor and apparently escaped injury. The radio gave no details of what happened after the attack but said the president was apparently being held at the base.

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JPA to sue media for defamation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Pharmaceutical Association's (JPA) fifth general assembly, on Friday, decided in principle to file a law suit against any local newspaper or news agency that officially carries any report defaming the pharmacists' profession. The association's decision came in response to a news item transmitted recently by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and which was carried by the local dailies. The report mentioned names of pharmacists referred to the disciplinary council for violating the profession's codes. The JPA president, Mr. Ghaleb Al Sabarni, told the meeting that one of the articles in the association's law bans the publication of any news item that exposes the profession, and violating pharmacists could be referred to the disciplinary council.

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Regent consoles Ghassebi family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday attended the funeral of the late Atallah Ghassebi, a retired army major general, and offered condolences to his family. Also attending the funeral were Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Ibn Zaid and Chief of Staff Fathi Abu Taleb.

Beirut gunmen fire at Romanian envoy

BEIRUT (R) — Gunmen opened fire Friday on the car of the Romanian ambassador to Lebanon on the road to Beirut airport in Muslim-controlled west Beirut, police said. They said it was not clear whether the gunmen were trying to kidnap or kill the envoy, Florea Chitu, who escaped unhurt. The airport road passes through mainly Shi'ite southern suburbs near the Bourj Al Barajneh refugee camp where the Shi'ite Amal militia has been battling Palestinian commandos.

Kuwaiti official welcomes U.N. force in Gulf

KUWAIT (R) — The head of Kuwait's oil fleet, which now runs a gauntlet of Iranian missile fire in the Gulf, has condemned attacks on civilian ships as cowardly and vowed to keep the country's oil lifeline open. Abdul Fatah Al Badr, chairman of the state-owned Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), also told Reuters he would welcome a U.N. naval peacekeeping force in the waterway.

Israel requests \$3b in U.S. aid

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel Friday asked the United States for \$3 billion in aid in the next fiscal year, Israel Radio reported. It said Finance Minister Moshe Nissim submitted the request at a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, asking for \$1.2 billion in economic support and \$1.8 billion in military aid.

U.S., Soviets discuss format of arms talks

GENEVA (R) — U.S. and Soviet negotiators met informally in groups here Friday to discuss the pattern of future meetings in resumed talks on curbing nuclear and space arms. U.S. officials said the delegates to the Geneva arms talks discussed "any possible restructuring of the kind of meetings, the format and that sort of thing" but gave no details.

Chad reports Libyan raids in north

ABIDJAN (R) — Libya's air force resumed bombing raids in northern Chad Friday morning, attacking the towns of Fada, Wour and Zouar, official Chad Radio reported. The radio, monitored in Abidjan, said a small girl was killed and two women seriously wounded in the attack on the north eastern oasis town of Fada, which Chad says it captured from Libyan troops earlier this month.

King urges active Italian role in Mideast peace

Italy looks favourably on Jordan's development plan

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer with agency dispatches

ROME — His Majesty King Hussein said Friday that Jordan looked forward to Italy's active role in the effort to contain the negative impact of economic problems in the Middle East, and help achieve peace and stability in the region.

In a speech at a luncheon hosted by Italian Premier Bettino Craxi, the King praised Italy's initiatives within the European Community towards achieving peace in the area.

The King later held a round of official talks with the Italian premier during which they discussed Jordan's five-year development plan for the occupied Arab territories and bilateral relations.

The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein and

Prime Minister Zaid Rifai.

Mr. Craxi told reporters after the meeting that Italy looked favourably on Jordan's development plan for the occupied territories, "which is not trying in any way to represent a political-institutional solution to the problems of the region."

Mr. Craxi said Italy saw the project as a humanitarian initiative for which it could provide technical as well as financial help. He said Rome could participate both by financing and by taking

responsibility for parts of the scheme.

Chief of the Royal Court Marwan Qasem, Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker and Foreign Minister Taher Masri held separate talks with Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti and Defence Minister Giovanni Spadolini.

Italy had already expressed support for plans by Jordan to develop the economy of the Israeli-occupied territories with an injection of foreign aid.

Italian President Francesco Cossiga told the King at a dinner on Thursday night that Italy saw the billion-dollar development plan to develop the area "with positive favour."

The King, who arrived in Rome for a three-day state visit on Thursday, had earlier spent 90 minutes with Mr. Cossiga in which he gave a detailed analysis of the latest developments in the Middle East and outlined the development plan.

Official sources quoted by Reuters said Mr. Cossiga, who applauded the King's commitment to the peace process, told him that Italy was ready to support his initiative.

Mr. Craxi had said earlier this week that Italy was willing to support any plan likely to bring peace. "And when I speak of support, I refer not only to political but also economic support," he told reporters.

Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti said in a television interview recorded Friday that the King's plan for the West Bank seemed a good one.

"We do not believe that it weakens the Palestinian cause, rather it helps it," he said. But he added: "The aid plan does not substitute for a political solution of the Palestinian problem, which must be given maximum prominence and priority because, until the problem of the Palestinian people is solved, the

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Iraqi forces repel 2-pronged offensive; raid Iranian towns

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — Iraqi forces Friday stalled a two-pronged Iranian offensive on battlefields 450 kilometres apart as both sides in the Gulf war reported continued fierce fighting and mounting casualties.

An Iranian surface-to-surface missile, the fourth to hit Baghdad in a week, killed or wounded several people Friday and Iraqi warplanes raided Iranian towns.

As with previous missile strikes on the Iraqi capital, a military spokesman gave no figure for casualties but said the attack damaged houses and shops.

Residents saw ambulances and fire trucks rushing to the scene of the blast, which sent up huge clouds of smoke and dust and was heard over a 15-kilometre radius of the city.

Iraqi warplanes again raided the Iranian towns of Hamadan and Qom Friday, the spokesman said. Ten planes also hit the west Iranian town of Isfahabad-e-Gharb, "turning it to rubble."

The spokesman said several bridges were knocked out in Hamadan and the jets "rained Qom with a hail of bombs" which found their targets.

Fighter bombers also attacked a railway station at the town of Arak, 240 kilometres south west of Tehran, which the spokesman said was used to ferry troops to the war front.

Iraqi warplanes "accurately and effectively" hit a large naval target, Baghdad's term for an oil tanker or merchant ship, off the Iranian coast at 1145 GMT, a spokesman said.

It was the fifth attack on Gulf shipping claimed by Iraq in a week.

Iraqi Information Minister Latif Nassif Al Jassem told the official Iraqi News Agency INA that Iran was issuing false statements containing "illusory figures" of Iraqi losses.

He said this was the result of heavy losses suffered by the Iranians in fighting east of Basra and because their plan to occupy the southern city of Basra had failed.

Baghdad communiques said Iraqi forces were still fighting fiercely with Iranian invaders east of Basra, with the Third Army Corps trying to dislodge them from footholds gained in a

week-long assault. They said the Iranians had suffered very heavy losses in "hopeless" attempts to cling on to areas seized.

On the central war front, an attack launched by Iran in mountainous country east of Baghdad on Tuesday night had failed to achieve its targets, Iraqi spokesman said.

They said the last of several enemy thrusts was thrown back Thursday night with Iranian losses of at least 500 killed or wounded.

A high command communique said forces defending Basra repelled many Iranian attacks on Iraq's "fortified defensive line south of the Fish Lake to the west towards the Shatt Al Arab waterway."

It said Iraqi warplanes flew 287 sorties and helicopter gunships 222 combat missions Friday against Iranian targets and troop positions.

One warplane was shot down, it said, raising the total of Iraqi planes lost since Iran launched its offensive a week ago to eight.

Nine civilians were killed and 63 wounded by Iranian shelling of Basra and in air raids on two

northern towns, it said.

Ninety-nine civilians have been reported killed and 563 injured in Iranian air and artillery attacks in the past week, not including casualties from the missile attacks on Baghdad for which no figures have been issued.

In Washington, U.S. military officials estimated Friday a total of 40,000 Iranian and 10,000 Iraqi troops have been killed or wounded in fighting around Basra in the Gulf war since Dec. 24.

"The Iranian dead and wounded outnumber Iraqi casualties by about four to one. We estimate that close to 20,000 Iranians have died and another 20,000 have been wounded," one of the officials, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

He said U.S. intelligence estimated 10,000 Iraqi troops were killed or wounded defending the Iraqi city of Basra on the southern front. He could give no breakdown on killed and wounded.

"The casualty figures are as close as we can estimate now, but I can tell you they have been

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Jordan supports call for Security Council meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has expressed support for a call by United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar for a special meeting of the U.N. Security Council at the foreign ministers level to discuss the Iran-Iraq war.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in Amman said the Jordanian government has received with appreciation and interest the secretary-general's proposal.

"Jordan welcomes this idea and considers it as a manifestation of a high level of concern over the Gulf conflict, and announces its total backing for the United Nations to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 582 regarding the Gulf war," the spokesman said.

The Foreign Ministry later cabled U.N. permanent representative at the United Nations in New York requesting him to convey this view to Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

Later Thursday, Acting Foreign Minister Thouran Hindawi met in his office with Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan, Mr. Ghafel Jassem Hussein. The ambassador informed the minister on the latest situation at the warfront and the successes being achieved there by the Iraqi Armed Forces.

In Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a temporary member of the United Nations Security Council, also backed the call by the secretary-general.

The Emirates News Agency WAM quoted Ya'qub Al Kindi, foreign affairs director at the Foreign Ministry, as saying the UAE supported any effort to stop the war, through the U.N. Security Council, the Organisation of Islamic Conference or the Non-Aligned Movement.

Israel proposes six-month trial ceasefire; Lebanon dismisses offer

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Israel has proposed a six-month ceasefire in South Lebanon to pave the way for a permanent peace.

Ambassador Johanan Bein, Israel's deputy chief U.N. delegate, told the U.N. Security Council that his government was ready to consider eliminating a security zone it has maintained for nearly nine years on the Lebanese side of the border.

Each phase of the withdrawal, he said, would involve a trial period.

But Lebanese Ambassador Rachid Fakhoury dismissed the proposal as a "mere red herring devoid of any seriousness." He demanded that Israel obey past Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

Israel, which invaded Lebanon in 1978 and again in 1982, withdrew the bulk of its second invasion force in June 1985, but

retained a contingent in the buffer zone inside Lebanon north of the Israeli frontier. Within that strip, Israel is supporting a largely Falangist militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

Bein told the Security Council that Israel was "willing to negotiate and cooperate with the government of Lebanon or any other credible partner."

"Israel proposes that the efforts directed towards a solution be based on the acceptance of the principles of trial periods and a stage-by-stage approach beginning with an immediate and total ceasefire in the entire area for a period of at least six months."

He said a permanent solution could then be negotiated based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The resolutions, respectively adopted after the 1967 and 1973 Middle East wars, call for an

Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories while affirming Israel's right to exist within secure borders.

The Israeli delegate spoke after the Security Council, in its first meeting of 1987, voted unanimously to extend the beleaguered 5,600-man, U.N. peacekeeping force in South Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another half year.

The 15-0 vote came amid growing concern by troop contributors and council members over attacks on the peacekeepers by Israeli forces and various Lebanese militias.

Irish Ambassador Robert McDonagh, whose country supplies a 700-man contingent to the force, deplored as a "particularly irresponsible act" the killing last weekend of an Irish soldier whose position was hit by a round fired by an Israeli tank.

(Continued on page 3)

Khatib returns after talks on ending 'camps war'

RAMTHA (Agencies) — Information Minister Mohammad Al Khatib returned home on Friday after representing Jordan in contacts made in Beirut and Damascus by a seven-man Arab League committee to end the "camps war" in Lebanon.

During his stay in Damascus Mr. Khatib also met with his Syrian counterpart Yasin Rajjoub and discussed with him means of strengthening information and media cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Khatib was seen off upon his departure from Damascus by Mr. Rajjoub, senior ministry officials and Jordanian ambassador in Damascus.

Mr. Khatib said Thursday, Jordan's relations with Syria are very good, and political coordination between the leaderships of the two countries are continuing for the sake of serving the interests of the Arab Nation.

The minister was speaking after a meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad during his stay in Damascus.

"I conveyed to the Syrian leader greetings from His Majesty King Hussein, and was asked to convey the Syrian President's greetings to the King," the minister said in a statement to newspapers in Damascus.

He said that contacts between Syria and Jordan are continuing at the highest level for the sake of promoting bilateral relations further and coordinating

(Continued on page 4)

Shamir under fire for hinting at flexibility

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir came under fire from right-wing politicians and militant Jewish settlers Friday for hinting that his refusal to yield any occupied Arab land might be negotiable.

In a Reuters interview Thursday about the prospects for peace talks, Mr. Shamir said: "Nobody will expect me to say now what will be my position when we meet."

Asked if his recently stated refusal to trade land for peace was necessarily his last word, he said: "I will not say it."

Daniella Weiss, spokeswoman for the extremist Gush Emunim (Bloc of the faithful) Movement of settlers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, told state radio: "Shamir should be more decisive in his refusal to give up territories."

She said the comments by Mr. Shamir, who leads the right-of-centre Likud Bloc, "set off a red light regarding his position and those of the Likud on this issue."

Mr. Shamir's spokesman, Avi Pazner, told Israeli reporters the prime minister's remarks did not indicate he had changed his position.

Goula Cohen, a member of parliament for the right-wing Tehiya Party, which advocates the annexation by Israel of the West Bank and Gaza, said: "The denial is not clear enough and we should explain himself."

In the interview, Mr. Shamir stressed the need for direct talks with Arab states rather than the

Arab youth continue attacks in West Bank

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli troops have dispersed attacking Palestinian youths who threw stones at an army observation post in the occupied West Bank, Israeli army radio reported.

The report said the clash occurred in the Balata refugee camp on the outskirts of the city of Nablus, during which the Palestinians unfurled the Palestinian flag.

In other incidents Thursday in

the West Bank, Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli government education office and at an Israeli bus, the radio said.

On Wednesday an Israeli man was injured when his car was stoned in the West Bank.

Meanwhile Israel's health minister on Thursday called on Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip to start administering themselves as she dedicated a new hospital facility.

Rabat: Some states trying to sabotage OIC summit

RABAT (R) — Morocco has accused certain states of trying to sabotage the Islamic summit conference due to open in Kuwait on Jan. 26, the Moroccan news agency MAP reported Friday.

It said Mohammad Tazi, director of Arab and Islamic affairs at the Foreign Ministry, told Islamic diplomats that some states "aimed to sabotage the meeting and divert it from essential problems concerning all Muslims."

He singled out Syria, saying that the role of Damascus in Arab and Islamic affairs had become "suspect."

Syria broke relations with Morocco last July when King Hassan held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Mr. Tazi said Morocco would attend the summit, the fifth to be held by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), but did not say at that level it would be represented.

King Hassan is current OIC chairman, having presided at the last summit held in Casablanca in January 1984.

Mr. Tazi "deplored that the

spirit of Islamic solidarity is not shared by all members of the organisation since one or two of them are striving to hinder it by bringing up questions which are unrelated to the organisation," the agency said.

In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati Friday confirmed Iran will not attend the Islamic summit.

Mr. Velayati, on a visit to Yugoslavia, told a news conference Iran would shun the OIC summit in Kuwait because of the venue.

"Kuwait is extending unlimited military and other support to Iraqi aggressors (in the Gulf war)," Mr. Velayati said.

Kuwait has reaffirmed its hope that Iran will attend an Islamic summit, the Kuwait News Agency KUNA said Thursday.

KUNA said Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah sent a message to Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati Thursday briefing him on preparations for the three-day talks and saying Tehran's participation would be welcome.

Chinese party leader resigns; Zhao takes over as acting boss

PEKING (R) — Chinese Communist Party chief Hu Yaobang resigned Friday after admitting making political "mistakes" and Premier Zhao Ziyang was named as acting party chief in his place, the official New China News Agency reported.

There had been reports for several days that Mr. Hu was in political trouble for having failed to control large-scale demonstrations last month during which students called for more democracy and freedom of speech.

The agency said an enlarged meeting of the ruling politburo had been held Friday.

"At the meeting, comrade Hu

Yaobang made a self-criticism of his mistakes on major issues of political principles in violation of the party's principle of collective leadership during his tenure," it said.

"Participants in the meeting gave comrade Hu Yaobang a seriously and comradely criticism and at the same time acknowledged such achievements in his work as there were," the agency said.

The communique issued by the meeting, carried in full by the agency, said Mr. Hu, 72 this year, would retain his posts as member of the politburo and of the party's Central Committee.



Hu Yaobang

Casey reported to be at centre of Iran scandal

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Casey has emerged as a key figure in the diversion of Iranian arms sales money to Nicaraguan rebels, a U.S. television report has quoted investigators as saying.

CBS News said that according to congressional sources computer tapes found in the office of fired National Security Council (NSC) aide Lt.-Col. Oliver North included numerous references to Mr. Casey.

The tapes also indicated Col. North and Mr. Casey met and spoke on the telephone many times in the period under investigation.

An unidentified member of Congress was quoted as saying that in some respects Col. North was more involved with Mr. Casey than with Adm. John Poindexter, head of the NSC and Col. North's immediate boss.

McFarlane repeats Reagan approval of Iran arms sales

WASHINGTON (R) — President Reagan's former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane Friday repeated his contention that Mr. Reagan gave advance approval for shipments of U.S. arms to Iran.

He said Mr. Reagan gave the go-ahead in early August 1985 despite opposition from Secretary of State George Shultz and Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan has said Mr. Reagan only gave retroactive approval to the arms sales, in October 1985, after being informed by aides that they had already taken place.

Mr. McFarlane, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Friday in open session, also said that before he resigned from the White House in December 1985, the secret Iran initiative was taking on the focus,

a priority on securing the release of American hostages in Lebanon. He said Mr. Reagan, in a telephone call to him, authorised the arms sales by Israel, with those arms to be replaced later by the United States.

"I said to him: Mr. President, as you know, your secretaries of state and defence are opposed to this. (Mr. Reagan said) 'yes, I understand that, and provided his own explanation for the basis for his decision,'" Mr. McFarlane said.

Mr. Reagan has said the initiative was designed to re-establish a relationship with strategically important Iran, help end the Iran-Iraq war, stop Iranian support for terrorism and help free American hostages in Lebanon.

Mr. McFarlane Friday strongly defended the arms sales, saying it would have been irresponsible for the United States not to reach out to Iranian moderates.

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King: Consensus emerging over need for international conference

PARIS (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said in an interview published in Paris that there is almost a total consensus over the need to tackle the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem through an international conference to be attended by all parties to the conflict and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

In an interview with the Al Sharq radio station in Paris, the King said that France, along with its European allies, could play a major role, in bringing about a just settlement to the problem through the proposed conference and through its influence on world affairs. The United States, the King noted, realises Jordan's position which is clear and frank, adding that "we have conveyed this stand to U.S. envoy Richard Murphy and told him that the only means of attaining peace lies through the proposed international conference."

King Hussein went on to say that Jordan has already turned down American suggestions for



that this organisation will truly reflect and represent the aspirations of its people and allow the people to express their views about their fate.

Although political coordination with the PLO leadership has been suspended, Jordan will continue to extend assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied territory as Jordan has been

doing ever since the 1967 occupation, King Hussein noted.

He said that Jordan's support for the Palestinians is a national duty and conforms to pan-Arab policies and national security.

"The door will remain open, however, for the resumption of dialogue with the PLO for supporting the Palestinian people, provided the PLO leadership is convinced that the dialogue should be comprehensive and should continue from the point where the previous talks left off," King Hussein said.

In reply to a question about U.S. arms sales to Iran, the King said that this subject came up in his talks with French leaders along with the other issues of concern to the Middle East region. "I have expressed my views directly to the United States about this affair, and have told Washington that the United States' credibility resulting from the U.S.-Iran arms deal has been affected to a great extent," King Hussein said.

With regard to the Iran-Iraq war, he said, that Iraq is only defending its territory and the Arab nation at large, and noted that Iraq has also been responding favourably to all peace bids to end the conflict, but that Iran has been adamant in its position and is determined to continue the fighting. For this reason, Washington's supply of arms to Iran is something which is difficult to understand, specially as such moves contradict with official American policy, the King stressed.

King Hussein reaffirmed his own endeavours for re-establishing solidarity among Arab countries and towards building a unified Arab stand, and said this is required to defend the Arab World and future Arab generations.

On the situation in Lebanon, the King said that it was a "great tragedy," and he expressed hope that the concerned parties in the conflict would find a means of reaching peace that would safeguard Lebanon's independence and sovereignty.

Tree planting season underway after Arbor Day celebrations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arbor Day celebrations were held in Jordan on Thursday when thousands of fruit and forest tree saplings were planted by citizens, organisations, school children and officials.

The main celebration was held near the Queen Alia International Airport under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, a total of 8,000 trees were planted on the site which forms part of a 25,000 dunum plot of land to be planted with all types of trees this season. Those attending the celebration planted 4,000 olive trees, 2,000 pine trees, and 2,000 palm trees, the agency reported.

At the outset of the celebration, Prince Hassan made a speech in which he underlined the importance of caring for trees and carrying out Ministry of Agriculture programmes.

He voiced particular interest in the Zarqa River Basin Project and stressed his desire to meet all those responsible for the project so that he could familiarise himself with the progress in implementing the scheme.

Prince Hassan was briefed by Mr. Tayseer Shabat, who heads the Amman afforestation department, about the department's tree planting programme for this year.

Minister of Agriculture Marwan Hmoud, who attended the celebrations, said in a statement to the press that upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein greater attention is being given this year to planting fruit trees, mostly olive trees, rather than forest trees wherever possible. This is being done in order to achieve the maximum exploitation of available land and to help achieve food security.

Hundreds of boys scouts and school children took part in the tree planting celebration which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Wahab Al Majali, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ibn Zaid, Cabinet members, senior government officials and high ranking army officers in addition to heads of diplomatic missions in Jordan and a large crowd of citizens.

At least nine million saplings were produced by Ministry of Agriculture nurseries last year and these will be supplied to Jordanian citizens, organisations and schools to be planted in different regions. The Ministry of Agriculture runs 12 nurseries which produce an average of seven million saplings a year.

25,000 trees planted in Greater Amman

In the Greater Amman region, 25,000 tree saplings were planted in a number of regions around the capital. A municipality spokesman said that 2,500 fruit and forest trees were planted near an army garrison between Raghdan and Al Nasha bridges in east Amman, 2,000 more in the Basman area and 2,500 others on slopes overlooking the 'Ain Ghazal area. He said that 3,000 saplings were planted in a number of regions on Jabal Al Taj, Mahmoud Qudah wood, Al Nasir Club, and Hamlan. At least 2,000 trees were also planted at Yarmouk region around Jofe and Khaled Ibn Al Walid gardens and 2,500 at Jabal Zuhour and Ras Al Ain. 2,000 on Jabal Amman, 3,000 along Ibn Sina street and 2,500 saplings near the public cemetery.

Other celebrations were held in Wadi Seer, Jawa and Khreibet Al Souq to the south of the capital where at least 3,000 trees were planted. School children, scouts and different organisations took part in the celebrations.

In Zarqa, 3,000 tree saplings were planted near the community college at a ceremony attended by government officials and large crowds. There were other planting ceremonies in Azraq, Bierfen and Jerash.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Fathi Abu Taleb attended a tree planting celebration held by the Armed Forces in Amman. This was attended by senior army officers.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday plants a tree at a site near the Queen Alia International Airport during a celebration to mark Arbor Day (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Former Senator, Abu Tayeh, laid to rest

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammad and Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, took part in the funeral of Sheikh Mohammad Abu Tayeh, a former member of the Upper House of Parliament who died on Wednesday at the age of 77. The late Mr. Tayeh was buried in the Royal cemetery on Thursday afternoon. The funeral was also attended by speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Wahab Al Majali, Cabinet members and other senior officials.

JEA to electrify 10 villages in Karak

KARAK (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) will supply electricity to 10 villages in Karak Governorate during this year, according to the JEA Karak district manager Yusef Al Smadi. He said that this is part of a new rural electrification project for the south of Jordan.

WAJ delegation leaves for Tokyo

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian delegation has left for Tokyo for talks with Japanese government officials on cooperation in the development of water resources in Jordan. The delegation, led by Mr. Mahmoud Talbouni, secretary general of the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ), will discuss studies conducted by a Japanese firm for exploiting water resources in Wadi Al Mujib, near Karak, in southern Jordan. The delegation will also make a tour of dams, water and sewerage projects and wastewater treatment plants in a number of Japanese cities.

Court sentences hashish trafficker

AMMAN (Petra) — The military court has sentenced Mohammad Tayem Dahash to one-year imprisonment with hard labour and fined him JD 5,000 for trafficking hashish. The general military governor endorsed the sentence.

CBJ issues foreign exchange regulations

AMMAN (Petra) — Banks and financial institutions will no longer be allowed to sell foreign currencies to locally-registered money exchangers except in the form of bank notes or coins, in accordance with new regulations issued on Thursday by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). Under the regulations, effective as of Saturday, money exchange departments in banks and financial institutions will be subject to control regulations of foreign currencies in accordance with a 1978 law.

Hamzeh heads for Geneva after talks in London

LONDON (Petra) — Minister of Health Zaid Hamzeh on Friday left London for Geneva to attend the meetings of the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) executive council scheduled to be held next week.

In London, Dr. Hamzeh held talks with the assistant under secretary of the British Foreign Ministry on means to further improve Jordanian-British relations. During the meeting, the British official voiced his country's readiness to cooperate with Jordan in medical and health fields especially the introduction of a health insurance scheme in Jordan. The British official commended Jordanian-British ties and said Britain was ready to contribute towards implementing medical projects in Jordan.

Dr. Hamzeh also visited the Alexander Fleming premises where he was received by the director of international relations and the director of health insurance at the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Hamzeh's lengthy talks with the two British officials focused on issues related to health insurance coverage in Britain as well as medical services.

Both sides reviewed the British experience in health insurance in England as well as the responsibilities of the British Health Ministry regarding all medical coverage.

Dr. Hamzeh later made a tour of the construction work and projects section at the British Ministry of Health where he was briefed on the various activities and responsibilities of the section.

The health minister also visited one of London's main hospitals which has been specially designed to reduce energy consumption by 50 per cent.

Jordan monitoring desert locust swarms

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Ministry of Agriculture source on Friday said that desert locusts, which have crossed into the Arabian peninsula from Sudan, posed no potential threat to Jordan and added the Kingdom was coordinating with all concerned countries on a regular basis to gather all possible information on the movements of the swarm.

The source was commenting on a U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report which said that Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Iran may soon be affected by waves of desert locusts which are breeding at alarming rates in Sudan.

The source told the Jordan Times that this breeding occurs every year and that the numerous campaigns launched to combat the locusts have not managed to eradicate the swarms.

However, the report said that if the locusts get out of control, they could reach as far as India and Pakistan.

The FAO report said that 15 aircraft have sprayed wide areas of northern and western Sudan for weeks but at least 100 small swarms have not been controlled.

A locust swarm can cover more than 2.6 square kilometres with 50 million insects, each five centimetres long and capable of destroying 100 tonnes of vegetation a day.

Anti-locust teams are scrambling to control the swarms in the Saudi coastal areas before they disperse into the centre of the vast desert region, according to a report reaching the Jordan Times.

Jordan to attend Arab talks on education and science

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the fourth general conference of the national Arab committees for education, culture and science which will be scheduled to open on Sunday in Doha.

On the agenda of the five-day conference are working papers submitted by Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Morocco, Iraq and the Arab Educational Bureau of the Gulf States. The papers deal with proposals and suggestions for promoting the work of national Arab committees and means of developing relations between these committees and world cultural and educational organisations.

Among the topics tackled in the papers are cooperation between national Arab committees in Africa, the implementation of regional and semi-regional projects as well as bolstering cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (IESCO).

The conference will also discuss translating UNESCO researches and studies in the educational, cultural and scientific fields into Arabic as well as supporting the use of Arabic language at UNESCO.

Dr. Michael Dababneh, director of the UNESCO section at the Ministry of Education, will represent Jordan in the conference.

Shamir under fire

(Continued from page 1)

international Middle East peace conference called for by Jordan.

"We say always: Negotiations without any preconditions. You cannot know what will be the positions of the parties when they meet around the table," he said.

Western diplomats in Tel Aviv welcomed the remarks, which they said seemed aimed at showing some flexibility in advance of Mr. Shamir's important visit to Washington next month, his first since becoming prime minister again last October.

The trip comes at a time when Israel's image in the United States has been tarnished by reports of its role in setting up the controversial U.S. arms sales to Iran.

The prime minister's message to his own party faithful, however, seems more intransigent.

He told a meeting of Likud activists last week he would not yield the West Bank and Gaza, in exchange for peace, and said Israel would not give up "one gram of its rights."

Mr. Shamir said Israel would never speak to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), even if it endorsed U.N. resolutions recognising Israel's right to exist and renounced armed struggle, making it an acceptable partner to the United States.

Disputing reports of a deadlock, Mr. Shamir said this week's Middle East tour by U.S. envoy Richard Murphy "demonstrates that something is moving."

"There is permanent progress towards peace," he said, citing improved relations with Egypt.

The prime minister dismissed a recent wave of Palestinian unrest, in which four Arab youths were killed and dozens wounded, as "small incidents" but said the time was not right for free elections in the occupied territories.

Meanwhile a public opinion poll published Friday indicated a sharp drop in the popularity of Israel's coalition government since Mr. Shamir became prime minister three months ago.

According to the poll, 46 per cent of those questioned thought the coalition government was doing a good job overall, down 16 per cent from a similar survey published in September 1986.

The poll, published after 1,200 Israelis were surveyed between Dec. 24 and Jan. 4, was carried out by the respected Smith Institute for Davar newspaper.

Israel proposes ceasefire

(Continued from page 1)

southern Lebanon.

The SLA also said it repelled an attack Friday by dozens of Hizbollah fighters on a position west of the village of Taibe, on the edge of the buffer zone.

An SLA official said none of the force's men was injured in the pre-dawn clash. Israeli military sources said the attackers abandoned large quantities of explosives, grenade launchers and Soviet-made AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifles.

In Tyre, Lebanon, police said two Israeli helicopter gunships strafed 60 militiamen of the mainstream Shi'ite Amal movement who overran an SLA position in Alman village Friday, in the same area. It was not clear if they were referring to the same incident.

The SLA has suffered 13 dead since the beginning of the year, mainly during suspected Hizbollah attacks. Independent sources say the assaults have harmed morale and the size of the SLA force has shrunk from about 2,500 to roughly 1,800.

Grand old villas stand as monuments to a more sedate, bygone age

Text and photos by Josephine Zamantri

AMMAN — The ever-moving, noisy and colourful ambience created in Amman's downtown, rises slowly filtering its way up the surrounding mountains until silence is reached on the highest residential peaks. On a still, clear summer morning, the old houses of the city's first urban quarters almost detach themselves from the ever-present swirling chaos of the valley below and stand serene monuments of a bygone architectural age.

Such houses, lining the edges of Jabal Amman, Weibdeh and Jabal Hussein, were an inevitable outgrowth of the new invigoration brought about after the establishment of the Hashemite Emirate in Jordan. The new state announced its physical presence not only through the erection of public buildings — such as the fine Hussein Mosque — but also in the detailed and gracious private residences immediately surrounding the downtown area.

One of the most elegant of these homes, the first Bilbeisi residence on Jabal Amman was constructed

in 1936. The square house with its magnificent, hand-frescoed circular balconies remains a monument to the skills of early Twentieth Century Amman architecture. It was, however, the later Bilbeisi residence, constructed nearby, which became the standard for all subsequent great private residences erected in Jordan.

Known by the Arabic term *qasr*, the supremely imposing building stands as a pinnacle commanding a perfect view of old Amman. The *qasr* designed by an Egyptian architect is a monument to one of Jordan's most influential families and the excellence of early Twentieth Century Arab craftsmanship.

The external facades are plain with minimum ornamentation, evoking an almost Pharaonic calm to the three-storey building. The purity of line is broken only by graceful, arched balconies and a monumental tower housing an internal staircase.

Woodwork

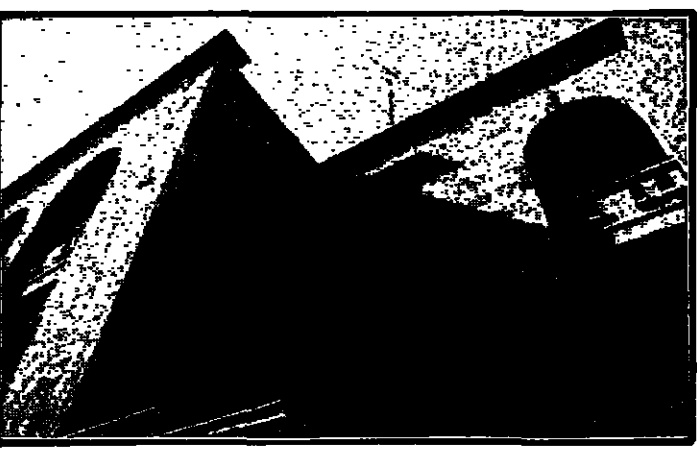
Woodwork of the *qasr* is pristine. The two main entrance doors of oak are carved with Arabesque relief work. The reception rooms are finely layered with magnificent timber. The stair well is lit by a masterful window of small diamond shaped glass panes, pieced together in a wooden framework. The work was carried out by Arab craftsmen.

The interiors of the *qasr* well reflect the grandness of the exterior. The several reception rooms and *divan* are spacious and well distributed in a surprisingly modern mode. The dining room is partially lined with mirrors.

The tiles of the bathroom again indicate perfectly executed workmanship and at the time set Amman ablaze with discussion, particularly one of the first floor — a spacious area resplendent in turquoise tiles and fittings.

The extensive gardens of the *qasr* well befit the grand building. In a gracious sweep flower beds and trees, radiate from a small central court separating the old and new dwellings. Hidden behind a large tree lies a classical Italianate fountain, a tiny touch of the foreign to a mansion of perfect Arab integration.

The Ya'esh villa of Jabal Weibdeh, a delicate pale orange stone building constructed in 1953, includes some of the finest stone carvings of Amman's older



Balconies of the Bilbeisi house, First Circle, Jabal Amman

homes. The villa was designed by Rafic Toukan, an engineer who practised mostly in the Gulf. The stone masonry was carried out by five masons from Nabhus. Two of them, Ardel Gaseim and Yusef Kelbone, were considered masters of their intricate craft.

'Stone carvings'

The main door, flanked by two columns with carved capitals, has an intriguing hint of recessed arches. The two major balconies on either side of the house also utilise arched stone work supported by columns. The balustrade of one consists of six, foot square rosetts chiselled from single stone slabs. The finest and most detailed carving frames the main arched windows at the centre of the house. Best described as plating, each strand of stone is totally carved away from the next. The work runs for about eighteen feet and is about eight inches in width. At one corner of the villa, smooth twists of stone edge up the wall, ending in an intricately carved pompom. According to the owner one such carved stone took the workmen up to two days.

The garden, designed by the engineer, has a classic Arab order and includes a fountain on a raised platform, whilst flower beds are set out in a formal geometric pattern reminiscent of the timeless Arab style.

There remains several hundreds of magnificent old homes and buildings dotted throughout the lower mountains; the Jaffa hotel in the downtown with its high triple arched windows, the Mango residence of the First Circle, the tiny balconied dwellings of Sa'ade street in Jabal Weibdeh, or the solid stone shops of lower Salt Street with their delicate iron balconies.

However, Amman's old buildings in the inner quarters are to a large extent under threat. Many old houses directly bordering downtown have already been demolished, others have deteriorated terribly after being turned into offices or warehouses. Others stand derelict, their beautiful gardens and forlorn palms ruined under years of dust and rubbish. The future of those buildings higher on the mountains remains uncertain too with the constant flow of urban dwellers to the outer suburbs.



The Ya'esh villa in Jabal Weibdeh

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ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Friday's

Al Ra'i: Conditions for a just peace

IN an interview with the Al Sharq radio station in Paris, King Hussein said the international community should implement the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and should reach a permanent and just solution for the Palestine problem. This statement implies that negotiations at an international conference are not an objective by themselves though they are being held under U.N. auspices. The objective of such conference is reaching an international formula for the implementation of the two resolutions and settling the Palestine problem. This statement has come to expose Israel's propaganda campaign with which it is trying to convince the world that negotiations between the Arabs and Israel should not be tied to pre-conditions or resolutions. With this Israel tries to convince the world that the negotiations should not be under any conditions and for this reason Tel Aviv has been rejecting the idea of an international conference which is primarily aimed at implementing U.N. resolutions. Israel wants negotiations without a limited aim and talks that can help it achieve its own objectives. But we are relieved to feel that the European Community has become convinced of the need for an international conference to bring about a lasting peace and end Israel's occupation of Arab land.

Al Dustour: Jordan campaigns for peace

KING Hussein's speeches delivered in the French capital and his talks with European leaders centered among other things on the Iran-Iraq war and its grave consequences on the Middle East region as a whole. The King's concern over the situation was reflected in an official Jordanian statement Thursday in which this country voiced support for the United Nations secretary general's call for a Security Council session to discuss the Gulf war. Jordan has since the very beginning of the war realised that this conflict will benefit the enemies of the Arab and Muslim countries because it drains away their resources and their power. Jordan has therefore backed the U.N. call as a fresh bid to find a solution to the conflict. The United Nations, among other organisations world wide, had tried without success so far to end the conflict and the tragedy and it is hoped that the Security Council will now embark on a new course of action that would lead to a settlement. U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has called for a meeting of wise people who, he said, can put an end to the bloodshed and the continuous loss of life. In his talks with French leaders King Hussein referred to the Gulf War as the second serious threat to world peace and pointed to Iraq's acceptance of all peace bids and to Iran's rejection of initiatives to end the war.

Sawt Al Shaab: Campaigning for real peace

KING Hussein is acting as a light in the dark, trying amidst a weak Arab situation and a near to collapse in Arab solidarity to make the nation rise once again. The King has been calling for a unity of action and for the establishment of real peace. In Paris, as he did in other European capitals and in Asia and everywhere he has visited, the King has made his voice heard loud and clear, calling for real peace. In his statement to the Le Monde newspaper and Monte Carlo Radio, King Hussein again spoke of the Jordanian effort to convene an international conference that can achieve the aspired peace. The Soviet Union, France and other countries have backed the call for such conference which is designed to implement U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and can find a lasting settlement for the Palestine problem. But against the King's endeavours Israel has been calling for the convening of a preparatory committee to prepare for the international conference and for direct negotiations between the Arabs and Israel while at the same time it continues to carry out aggression on Arab countries, and to receive support for its actions from the United States. However hard Israel tries to dissuade the world from the idea of an international conference it cannot succeed in its attempt despite U.S. backing.

Thursday's

Al Ra'i: King paves the way

NOW that King Hussein's visit to France has ended, one can say that the ground has been paved for the first step towards convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. The visit secured France's total support for proposed conference and helped to foil Israel's drive to dissuade Europe from helping to convene the international parity. King Hussein was quite frank in issuing warning for the United States against producing another alternative to the idea of the peace conference because, he said, such idea would end in failure. We should also point out that the European role is considered vital for convincing the United States in accepting the idea of this conference and also in taking active part in it. The French prime minister has promised to involve his country in such an affair and to prepare a suitable climate for the conference. King Hussein's visit to Europe is to be regarded as a fresh and serious attempt in preparing the ground for a lasting peace in the Middle East region. The Arab countries will no doubt benefit from the development, since it will break the deadlock in the search for a solution to their major problem.

Sawt Al Shaab: Jordan ensures EC support

THE international conference which has been called for by Jordan and which has been supported by numerous peace loving nations is one which will be comprehensive and therefore bound to yield a lasting and honourable peace. The idea of the conference has become acceptable and clear for the international community and this situation has assumed more significance with the King's visit to France where he discussed the subject with French leaders. But unfortunately this endeavour is being confronted with a U.S.-Israeli attempt to undermine the idea of an international conference simply for the sake of enabling Israel to liquidate the Palestine problem and implement Zionist plans in the Arab region. As Jordan is escalating its efforts for the convening of an international conference the United States and Israel continue to obstruct such efforts by proposing preparatory meetings and direct negotiations between the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This attempt was clear in a recent mission to the Middle East carried out by U.S. envoy Richard Murphy who failed to achieve anything for his administration. The United States has been adopting Israel's views and striving to bring about direct negotiations that can lead only to partial agreements which in turn would perpetuate Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and enable Israel to drive out the Arab people from their homeland.

VIEW FROM AMMAN

The Iran-Iraq war: The dream and the reality

By Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber

THE Iran-Iraq war is an example par excellence of a situation where man's passions overtake his reason blinding him to the damage he is doing not only to others but ultimately to himself as well. This past week Iran launched its twenty seventh major attack since the commencement of hostilities seven years ago. As is the case with any war where one of the combatants thinks he is fighting for a historic mission, a sacred cause or a matter of destiny, the war is bound to escalate in its ferociousness and destruction. On January 11, 1987 Iraq was forced to attack the city of Qom, the residence of the Imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: a step calculated to inflict not only physical but mental damage and spiritual anguish as well. Over the years this seemingly endless, and to many irrational conflict, has escalated to a total war. It was bound to escalate considering the Iranian view that it is a total war, not a limited one, the Iraqi initial view. From border clashes to military campaigns and incursions into each other's territories it escalated to blockades, then to inflicting damage on economic installations and then it degenerated into the final escalation of hitting civilian targets. Each blow on a civilian target deepens the wound of animosity and hatred and calls for revenge.

The damage done to the soul of the area, especially the belligerents, cannot be calculated nor will it be repaired quickly. Some Western writers have already begun calling it, callously, the "forgotten war". How can it be forgotten in a region that forgets nothing? A region where the tragedies of centuries ago are still celebrated with fierce passion as if they happened yesterday? This latest Iranian attack on Iraq is called Karbala Five, harking back to the martyrdom of the Imam Al Hussein at the town of Karbala in 680 A.D. This day of terrible mourning, Ashura falls on the teeth of

Muharram in the Islamic Hijra calendar. Surely it is calculated to arouse passion and to awaken hatred. Against all the precepts of logic, neighbourliness even religious ties, Iran refuses to bring the conflict to an honorable conclusion. It is as if the whole region is galloping into a dark cave. And, where once it held enormous wisdom and timeless beauty, it seems as if it degenerated into brutality and loss of hope: as if too preoccupied in preserving, indeed resurrecting the past, instead of looking towards the future.

It is an unusual conflict partly because it has no beauty or elegance in it and partly because it has no cause, though Iran thinks it does have one. Several factors contribute to the uniqueness of this conflict, chief among them is the fact that it is between two developing nations that should be developing not destroying. Between two neighbours that share a common religious heritage and have broken bread and eaten salt with each other. Secondly because of its unusually long duration and especially because it is between two Third World nations. Thirdly because it has escalated to such proportions that its continuation has truly become another strategic goal of Israel. A few weeks ago minister Ariel Sharon remarked that it will be a catastrophe if Iran won the war but a greater calamity if Iraq won. On another later occasion he added that Israel hopes the war will go on forever, and if it must end, it should end with no winner and no loser; and if there must be a loser it is better if it were Iraq.

In retrospect the view of the war by the combatants was radically different: Iraq hoped it would be a limited one whereas Iran thought of it as a total war giving it a historic opportunity to resurrect the ancient glory of Iran. This, among many other factors helps explain the fierceness of the consecutive Iranian attacks. It is

also an unusual conflict in view of the volume of human and material losses it has thus far entailed. The psychological barriers it is erecting, on top of the old ones, add another dimension to its uniqueness and this in a region that still carries the scars of the past like badges of honour or passports to the future: a region that still clings to what it considers immutable truths though the realities are constantly changing. It is a unique, though a dreadful conflict. Consider that it is fought in one of the most strategic locations in the world, a region that also happens to be the source, indeed the major spring of energy, a region considered very vital by the world powers, the super and those not so super, and yet no serious attempt has been made to bring the conflict to a conclusion. Why?

And why is Iran so adamant in bringing the conflict to a settlement? Many observers believe that this last major attack, Karbala Five, was designed to undermine beforehand any serious consideration by the organisation of Islamic conference to be held later this month in Kuwait. This may indeed be the case, although it is not an altogether satisfactory answer. This leaves us with the question of what Iran really wants. Truly, what does Iran want? Living in the heart of conflicting dramas often causes one to lose sight of what is now happening and what is sought in the future. As the duration of the conflict is stretched beyond all logical proportions the answer may be a simple one: Iran of today wants the empire of yesterday. And why not if one operates from a millennial vantage point and thinks the sacrifice, however enormous, and the suffering, however bad, is worth the cause. For those, especially those out of step with their times, the dream which to others may be the nightmare, is the ultimate reality.

Deng's reforms exorcise Mao

After surviving its worst economic crisis yet, Deng Xiaoping's government has kept modernisation on the road in China and started new reforms. But when the elderly leader goes, the try-it-and-see attitude which has worked so well might go too. Collins MacDonnell weighs up the chances for China.

WHEN the history of post-Mao China comes to be written, 1986 could be seen as the year when Deng Xiaoping's leadership fought a decisive battle against its opponents. After last year surviving the worst economic crisis since it came to power, it has kept modernisation on the road, started new reforms and above all been seen to keep cool in the face of criticism.

In foreign affairs, it has brought the relationship with its neighbour the Soviet Union to the point where a healing of the 26-year-old split has begun to look possible. Though China responded cautiously to Mikhail Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in July, trade and other contacts with the USSR are rising.

Today, Peking's foreign policy is to maintain good relations on the widest front so that modernisation at home can proceed undisturbed.

Deng's final and biggest problem, that of the succession, is yet to come. Even leaders of his choice (and he may not be able to choose) will have difficulty keeping the reform momentum going, because none of them have his commanding influence. And the reform itself may, like last year, generate difficulties which will reverse the programme.

Deng made himself vulnerable in 1985 by losing control of the economy. Last year's fall in grain output, inflation and corruption scandals provided ammunition to his conservative opponents for a campaign from which he and his colleagues have emerged bruised but unbroken. But he has now kept reform on the road for eight years. Every day longer that it and he survive gives a better chance for the long run.

The moves which caused the most trouble in 1985 — more freedom for the factories and price reform — were temporarily shelved but Deng has kept the ball rolling with other innovations. Political reform resurfaced in mid-summer when a press debate on intellectual freedom switched suddenly to a discussion of slackening party control.

The points raised were later dismissed as only "scholar's views," and Deng told foreign visitors the issue would not emerge again till next year. But it is still being discussed by what many believe to be Deng's think-tank, the Academy of Social Sciences.

"We hope to make the political mechanism much more rational, with democracy and the rule of law as the moving spirit," Professor Zhao Fusan says.

"This will lead to the question, what will be the role of the party?" Professor Zhao indicated that defining it could mean establishing a "checks and balances" system, though he believed this would need years to take shape.

Even in the economy, new reforms like the sale of bonds and shares and the introduction of contract labour instead of lifelong employment have taken off. And the vigour of the private economy sector is impressive. The free market in Lanzhou, capital of Gansu province, for example, has become a trade centre for China.

Villagers from Lanzhou's suburbs flog their privately-purchased trucks hundreds of miles to Sichuan or Qinghai to buy oranges or fish. Traders from far-off provinces come with clothing or furniture, to sell on Lanzhou's streets. This is increasingly different from the original notion of a local farmer selling his own eggs or cabbage in the nearest city.

The private economy plays a key role in diminishing unemployment. China claims today it has few young people "waiting for jobs." This is not wholly true, but Peking has defused what was an explosive issue five years ago.

In spite of all this good news, Deng's problems are far from over. Even some younger men in his own leadership — Deputy Premier Li Peng, for instance — appear to favour a centrally planned, large-project-oriented Soviet approach more than Deng-type individualism. When the octogenarian leader goes, the try-it-and-see attitude which has brought China so much benefit might go too.

Even under Deng, the political reform may not get far off the ground. It seems inconceivable that any Communist Party should willingly give up power.

The party "rectification" begun three years ago, intended to weed out the mobs who joined during the Cultural Revolution, has trickled away into an inoffensive "re-education" movement. And without political reform, which at the least would give managers and experts freedom to make decisions, economic reform will be a failure.

The much-touted legal system, though better than the vacuum which preceded it, does not provide justice as viewed in the West. The traditional notion that anyone in the hands of the law must be guilty lingers on, and there seems little chance at a trial of adequate defence. Torture by the police is widespread, according to senior law officials reported in the Chinese media.

Although the government has the economy under control, there are underlying problems which it has not solved. The key issue of how to give factory managers more power without sending the economy off the rails remains to be solved.

If in future the reform goes badly wrong — such as producing high inflation — there could be popular demand for a return to the old state, if unproductive, centrally-planned system. This would be disastrous, since central planning has already shown itself incapable of meeting China's needs.

Deng is sitting on unpredictable social issues which could explode at any time. One is high-level corruption, less overt than in 1985 heyday but still manifest even to outsiders in the way senior officials' relatives are promoted or given trips to the West.

Another issue is the divisive policy of investing where returns are greatest, in the relatively skilled and prosperous east. This is enhanced by the growing affluence of the city suburbs compared with the deep countryside.

China officially admits to 60 million living in dire poverty. It is a figure made easier to appreciate after watching a half-finished plate of dumplings snatched from the table in a restaurant in central Peking and wolfed down by hungry citizens.

Perhaps most important for the long term is better education. Many millions of Chinese are illiterate. Continued ignorance will threaten the economic reform and even the proposed small measure of political change.

Maybe Deng should use his last years in an effort to consolidate his reform by making sure that education gets the money it needs to turn out skilled and innovative people — Financial Times feature.

Reagan under pressure as talks resume

By William Scally
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Superpower nuclear arms talks resumed Thursday in Geneva with a badly weakened Reagan administration under congressional pressure to make progress.

Moscow has been signalling publicly that it wants to talk seriously — but analysts say it is looking for flexibility on Washington's part, while chief U.S. negotiator Max Kampelman says he is taking no new initiatives to the Geneva talks.

The latest round, expected to run about six weeks, follows negotiations over the last 22 months and two U.S.-Soviet summits that have left unresolved the key dispute over President Reagan's "Star Wars" missile defence programme.

Spending on the programme, officially called the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), and on Reagan's \$12 billion defence

budget is under attack in Congress where newly assertive Democrats — who now control both houses for the first time since Reagan took office in 1981 — are pressing for movement on arms control.

On top of this, the arms-for-Iran scandal has diminished the political power which enabled Reagan to launch the biggest U.S. military buildup in peacetime history and to dominate the arms control agenda until now.

It has also caused an upheaval in his National Security Council (NSC), shaken last November by the resignation of then-director John Poindexter and the firing of his aide, Marine Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North, amid revelations that U.S. arms had been sold secretly to Iran and proceeds diverted to U.S.-backed "contra" rebels in Nicaragua.

The NSC has yet to settle down under its new director, Frank Carucci, who inherits the task of mediating between the State and

Defence Departments on arms control questions.

Analysts say Reagan's political troubles are doubtless being carefully watched in Moscow.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has emphasised his readiness for "real talks" on nuclear weapons cuts and has named first deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Vorontsov to replace Viktor Karpov as chief Soviet negotiator.

The move was welcomed in Washington where Kampelman, the chief U.S. negotiator, suggested that Vorontsov might have clout in Moscow and more "running room" in the negotiation than Karpov.

Kampelman was named State Department counselor, an elevation in status that officials said might impress on the Soviet side that Washington was giving more weight to the negotiator's job.

The Soviet Union, while emphasising readiness to talk, has sounded pessimistic about relations with the United States.

Analysts say Moscow is carefully watching Reagan's crisis on the Iran-contra issue and is likely to tailor its policies accordingly.

"They are serious about talking, which does not mean they would offer the president a helping hand," Dimitri Simes, a Soviet expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said in an interview.

Simes said Moscow would be ready to explore any U.S. flexibility. But he added:

"Particularly during the Iran-contra affair, they will go out of their way not to sound positive and optimistic unless they get something from the president."

Simes predicted that Reagan meanwhile would find his efforts to get a three per cent increase in the defence budget directly linked to whether he was considered serious on arms control.

He said he saw no sign the administration had yet made the needed decisions on these policies.

King urges active Italian role

(Continued from page 1)

whole region will be characterised by great instability."

Official sources quoted by Reuter said King Hussein identified the biggest obstruction to peace in the region as the Lebanese war and the Gulf conflict.

According to the sources, there was no mention, during the talks, of last week's visit by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who told reporters that the King's presence would create an excellent opportunity for reviving Middle East peace efforts.

Italian leaders played down suggestions by Mr. Peres that Rome could act as a point of contact in such a peace process.

Mr. Craxi, according to Reuter, flatly denied a remark by the Israeli leader that he had left a message here for the King.

They have also thrown cold water on Mr. Peres' statement that the Middle East was closer to peace than ever before, and that King Hussein's trip here would provide an opportunity for relaunching negotiations that could lead to a peace conference between Jordanians, Palestinians

and Israelis.

Mr. Andreotti said he wondered on what basis the Israeli foreign minister had made his remark and one government source said Thursday "it does not seem to us that peace is very near. In fact, the situation is completely stalled."

He said that Italy was sceptical about the possibilities at present of an international peace conference and said many problems needed to be resolved before this kind of meeting could take place.

In his dinner speech Thursday, the King said the longer Israel occupied the Arab territories the more regional and international difficulties increased, with the Middle East conflict taking new forms such as terrorism.

He said terrorism should not be allowed to take attention away from the region's fundamental problems and that the essence of the conflict was the necessity for Israel to end occupation.

The King added that because of Israel's obstinacy and tension between superpowers, an international peace conference was currently impossible. "Such

tension has frozen any chances of joint international action to end the Iran-Iraq war which could spread to other nations in the Gulf."

Italian police mounted a major security operation around King Hussein and Queen Noor during their visit to the Rome City Hall and the Monument of the Unknown Soldier on Friday.

The Royal couple is accompanied by Prime Minister Riffai, Mr. Qasem, Gen. Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker, Mr. Masri and

Jordan's Ambassador to Italy Tareq Madi.

Mr. Masri also held a separate meeting with Mr. Andreotti on Thursday in which they discussed world issues in general and developments in the Middle East region in particular.

King Hussein and Queen Noor arrived here from Paris at the invitation of the Italian President and Mrs. Cossiga, and are scheduled to have an audience with Pope John Paul in Vatican on Saturday.

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(2)- The cost of the tender document will be a non-refundable sum of JD 1,000 for the first copy and JD 300 for the second copy.

(3)- The deadline for obtaining tender documents from the Ministry of Public Works in Amman is March 14th, 1987.

(4)- The tender is divided into two sections and award will be according to the decision of the Central Tenders Committee.

No stipulation or condition from any tenderer for the award of the two sections together will be accepted.

(5)- Tenders shall be submitted to the Government Tenders Directorate in Amman not later than 12:00 noon on Saturday, March 28th, 1987.

Chairman,
Central Tenders Committee
P.O. Box 1220

Handwritten signature: *Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber*

Scattered notes for scattered times



Talking straight
Marwan Muasher

It has been a while since I last wrote. That is due to several reasons. The fact that I got busy, or busy as I prefer to call it, coupled with the frustration out of not publishing several of my articles, left me out of the writing cycle for some time.

I am not a professional writer. I therefore do not possess the ability of sitting down and writing an article whenever one is due, I am driven in what I write by my feelings, and if these happen not to coincide at the time with those of the editor, I cannot switch them off and think of another subject. I have thus continuously failed my editor's request to avoid sensitive subjects at times and resort to "safe" ones that would not offend anybody. I have tried several times in the past to preserve the continuity of my column by assuring that one appears every two weeks regardless of the degree of emotional support I had for it. I have never felt comfortable with that idea, however. There are several things one does that become part of one's routine, but I hope writing will never become one of these things for me. Unless of course, I want to make a living out of it!

A writer has a definite responsibility to keep a minimum level of continuity with his readership. The fact is, however, that if he is directly or indirectly, but

constantly, kept from voicing his views, he might either get frustrated and give up the whole process, or, more dangerously, start resorting to tangential subjects that lack substance and are of little importance to society.

That is a trap that is difficult not to fall into. But I do believe that one should try one's best not to abandon important subjects and choose less controversial ones just because the latter subjects are more "publishable." Otherwise, the quality of this whole process of exchange of ideas will suffer drastically.

A few days ago, the city of Salt's municipality demolished a small cafe at the entrance of the city as part of a "beautification" scheme. "Al-Mugharbi" Cafe is only about forty years old, but it symbolises the meeting place of many of Jordan's modern day politicians who helped shape the country since the 1940s, when the secondary school at Salt was one of the few leading learning centres in the Kingdom. At a time when we keep boasting about our history and tradition we find ourselves unable to preserve a small cafe that holds some important seeds of the growth of a nation.

And while different voices rose in protest of such a puzzling decision, none could result in an organised effort to save the cafe from destruction.

Al-Mugharbi Cafe is a thing of the past now. I suggest, however, that parliament enact a law preserving monuments of national importance from shortsighted decisions such as the one taken by the Salt municipality. Nations around the world spend fortunes to save their national monuments. I am positive that with just a little more money, an alternative solution could have been implemented that would have left Al-Mugharbi Cafe standing today. Unfortunately for both the city of Salt and Jordan, that is not the case today.

Recently, I attended a computer conference held in Amman to discuss national issues related to computer applications in Jordan. During the conference I was intrigued by several observations about people's behaviour.

One observation which was very interesting was that few people know how to present their subject. Regard-

less of the level of competency of the speakers, I noticed very few who could deliver a clear presentation on their subject of expertise. Most speakers either simply read the whole paper they had to present, or fell short of establishing a clear framework from which they could go into details. Instead, presentations came largely scattered, unorganised, narrow, and lacking a general perspective.

Almost none of the speakers stuck to the time allotted to him. Even though every one knew exactly how much time they were given, few seemed to have rehearsed their presentations earlier, and many did not seem to mind taking more time even after repeated reminders from the sessions' chairmen.

This is due, I think, to a lack of a manager's view among us in general, and among our professionals in particular. We do not seem to have, on the middle management level, enough competency in a system's approach to problems that looks at details only as part of a general framework rather than as an end in itself. I hope that the Royal committee for Administrative reform would look at this problem seriously and provide training programmes for our middle managers on proper management tools.

Documentaries on JTV: Highly informative, relevant and timely

By Sama Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "The Africans," a documentary series presently being screened on JTV, has provoked great controversy in Europe, the United States, and the Third World.

The nine-hour series discusses the influence of Islam and the West on Africa and their impact on its culture throughout the continent's history. Presented by Ali Mazrui, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, research professor at the University of Jos in Nigeria, and author of more than a dozen books on Africa, the series portrays an insider's colourful view of Africa, its inhabitants, and its culture before and after the arrival of outsiders. A picture of the conflict between indigenous and modern-day African culture and values and political confrontations afflicting the continent are faithfully projected in the BBC production.

Although there are nine episodes of "The Africans," only eight will be presented by JTV. The fourth episode was not delivered to JTV because of a lawsuit filed by an African leader against the BBC, and the case is still in court.

That episode discusses how slave trade had a lasting impact on African communities: It set village against village, and tribe against tribe; and allowed certain empires to become rich and ruthless by trading humans for guns. The episode also shows how Europeans had exploited the natural wealth of Africa. It presents the view that "Africa did more to help the development of the West than the other way round. Centres of population grew up around the mines, ports and railway terminals, starting a process of urbanisation which took the indigenous people away from agriculture and into the harsh realities of city life," according to the documentary's

promotion leaflet. "It is not an easy job to choose a good documentary because many of them may mean nothing to JTV audience," said Fatmeh Masri, head of the foreign programmes selection at JTV since 1985. "I try to select documentaries that are up-to-date and that are related to current events in the region," she told the Jordan Times.

Ms. Masri, who has been working with JTV since 1969, said that she tries to choose series that would not only interest Jordanians, but also foreigners who live here, and others in neighbouring countries where JTV is received, such as Syria, the West Bank, Palestine, and South Lebanon. "It's important to choose varied, informative and educational documentaries because TV is a major media tool that most people depend on for understanding modern problems," Ms. Masri added.

Each year Ms. Masri travels to London, Cannes and Monte Carlo where TV productions from all over the world are exhibited. This gives her a chance to see previews of new programmes, get new ideas, and to make new contacts, "especially with the small produc-

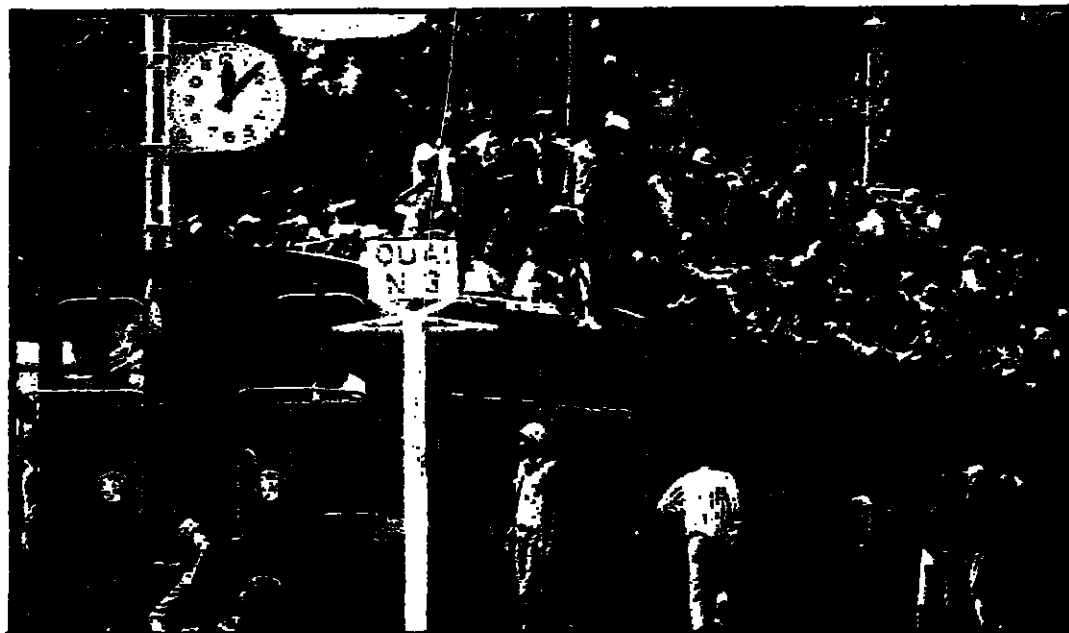
ers who usually make very good productions, like Australians, for example, who make excellent scientific documentaries," she emphasised. "If there is a timely programme which might interest the viewers, I order it. If the tapes are ready, we receive the programme in a week; otherwise, three weeks," Ms. Masri added. Before broadcasting the programmes, they must first be evaluated by the censorship committee.

Another method Ms. Masri uses in choosing programmes is by reading literature on them. She receives weekly and monthly periodicals on new programmes from Europe and the U.S. If something looks good to her, she receives a sample cassette to review it to find out if it is worth ordering the entire series.

Ms. Masri said that one of the difficulties of choosing good and recent documentaries is that many of them are 10 to 14 hours long. "We don't know whether the viewers like the programmes or not. They might get bored with them, or they might be too heavy for the taste of the majority of the audience," she said.

Ms. Masri stressed on the importance of audience reaction, and said that JTV needs to hear from the public what they think of the programmes. "We would like to receive more letters from our viewers telling us their opinions on the documentaries, otherwise we will never know what type of programmes they prefer," she asserted. She added that the documentaries are too expensive, and it may not be worth broadcasting a programme if people were not interested. Each documentary episode costs approximately \$600 on a one-year loan basis.

A memorable documentary that appeared during the past year was "The Four Horsemen," in two episodes. It shows the unnecessary suffering and despair of war, with specific emphasis on the major role played by the



The Africans — Wednesdays at 9:10

superpowers. "End of Empire" is another 14-hour series which had a large approval by the viewers, and Her Majesty Queen Noor showed particular interest in the series, according to Ms. Masri. The programme penetrates into the main themes and tackles the worries that run through the world of modern-day architecture. "The Story of SOE" was also a success in Jordan. The

eight hour documentary portrays one of the most secret operations of World War II, and how Special Operations Executive promoted sabotage and guerrilla warfare in German-occupied countries. "The Day the Universe Changed" is a new series that will soon be aired on JTV. The 10-hour documentary is presented by James Burke who had also written and narrated "Connections," which impressed a large number of viewers when it was screened several months ago. Furthermore, "The Mogul" is a new series that is expected to attract JTV audience.

Many JTV viewers interviewed by the Jordan Times said that they were very impressed with the documentaries because they were very recent and most of them were broadcast either at the same time as many countries in Europe and the U.S., or only shortly after.

JTV has many more controversial and worthwhile documentaries that will be aired on Channel 2.



End of Empire

Traditional Chinese medicine brings hope to paraplegics

By Xiong Lei

A Chinese saying goes: "No doctor like to cure paraplegia or he must lose his face." So paraplegia seems to be a forbidden area to many doctors.

But Cheng Zhiren, a skating coach turned doctor, does not believe this paralytic condition is incurable. In fact, he has established his fame in rehabilitating paraplegics.

His patients have been confined to bed or wheelchair due to various causes: cervical or vertebral injuries, stroke, congenital cerebellar hypoplasia, poliomyelitis, etc.

Over the past three decades, Dr. Cheng has helped more than 4,000 of such victims get up on their own feet again. A number of them are not only able to move around and take care of themselves, but also able to lift and carry heavy loads. They can take part in physical labour like any able-bodied person.

The 56-year-old Cheng, practising in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, also works with Tian-shouan Rehabilitation Hospital at Changping County in the northern suburb of Beijing every summer. The 40 patients accepted by this rustic hospital say they have chased fear from all parts of the country — Inner Mongolia, Guizhou, Guangdong, Anhui, Shandong, and others.

One of them is Yang Gao, a 45-year-old army officer from Guangzhou. He fell from the rings during a gymnastic exercise in July 1978 and suffered a fracture in his cervical vertebra.

"My life was saved after I was rushed to the hospital," Yang recalls. "But my four limbs all became paralysed, and I could never get them straightened. My hands were nervously clenched and I could not grasp anything."

Yang was certified a "special-class handicapped" by his work unit in accordance with the government regulations. This means he had physically lost his viability and had become entirely dependent.

The desperate Yang tried all sorts of peculiar folk prescriptions that he could collect, in order to stand up again. "I even took scorpions, centipedes and things like that for medicine," he said, "but none of them worked."

Two years later he learned about Dr. Cheng from People's Daily. Cheng's 46 patients in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, wrote a letter to the paper under the title "Hope" commending both Cheng's skills and sense of responsibility. A field report accompanying the letter proved that the doctor's treatment was effective.

Immediately, Yang turned to Cheng for help. He did not expect, a few months after he sent the letter to Cheng, that the doctor would come to him in person.

"I was overwhelmed by him at the very beginning," Yang explains the doctor's magic. "My limbs used to twitch every time a person touched them, whether it was a doctor or colleague. When he gently touched me on my legs, my spasms were gone, and I felt comfortable."

The very next day Yang stood up with the help of crutches for the first time in more than two years. In less than one month after Dr. Cheng's treatment, Yang was able to stand all by himself for a little while, and walk 200 metres.

The treatment looks incredibly simple at first glance. Cheng uses no fancy medicine or apparatus. His major weapons against the paralysis are no more than sand bags, splinters, needles for acupuncture, and massage.

His message is unique. He not

only rubs the patients' muscles with palms of his hands, but also uses his fingers, elbows, and even knees. His movements over the patients are fascinating to an observer. Sometimes he looks as if he were playing the piano, other times shadow boxing.

"While we patients receive medical treatment," explains Yang Gao, "on-lookers also have an artistic treatment. Dr. Cheng's massage is comfortable to both body and mind."

Liu Jingho, an experienced nurse and wife of a patient, says Cheng's message "penetrates" and gives the feeling of "strength and gentleness at once."

Cheng's movements look very much like *qigong*, ancient Chinese breathing exercises, said to have medical effect. The doctor, however, denies he applies that particular exercise to his patients. "That might mystify my treatment," he says.

What he does emphasise is flexibility in his message: "It is like fighting an enemy to activate paralysed nerves and stiff muscles. First you have to probe to see how strong the enemy is, then determine how you can cope with it." This probing results in his dazzling finger and body movements. Each message is individualised, different from the last.

The theory behind his treatment, Cheng says, is the "systematic concept" of the traditional Chinese medicine, which deals with the patient as a whole.

"We take everything into consideration," he explains, "such as the history of the patient's family, his social status, cultural and educational background, neighbourhood and natural environment in which he lives, the season when he falls ill, etc. In the case of paraplegics, we not only try to rehabilitate them physically, but also pay attention to their mental health."

Another traditional concept that influences Cheng's treatment is "balanced movement." The key concept here is "enliven," by which he means to motivate the patient: "Life exists only in movement. So all my therapy is centered around this idea of motivation."

Sand bags are placed on the patient's body to correct deformed physical structure. Splinters are tied onto legs to help the patient keep balance and gain strength when trying to stand up and walk. Acupuncture and massage therapy activate paralysed

nerves and limbs. The last but not least important concept that Dr. Cheng regards as essential is "mind concentration," whereby he advocates sharing the feelings with the patient.

"The doctor must share his patients' misery and be determined to get rid of the pain," he says.

On the other hand, he adds, the patients should also concentrate their minds on establishing confidence in their rehabilitation, and become willing to cooperate with the doctor.

Cheng attributes 60 per cent of his success to the patients' cooperation: "If they are overtaken by a gloomy mood in that their lives have ended with paraplegia, and refuse to move, any kind of therapy, no matter how wonderful, will be powerless."

So far at least one thing has encouraged him. A number of his ex-patients have become rehabilitation doctors after they recovered. "They are studying hard and doing well," Cheng said.

"Some of them have promising prospects" — China features.

JTV Channel 2 Preview

Sat. — Jan. 17, 1987

8:30 Music Box

9:30 Dad's Army

10:20 Feature Film
Shark's Paradise

Starring:
David Byrne
Sally Taylor
Ron Beck

In the gold coast of Australia, an unknown person threatens the people in a coastal touristic area with his strong control over sharks which can, if released, destroy tourism, unless he is paid five million dollars. So a straight shooting cop, a gorgeous con girl and a highrolling ex-CIA agent team up to discover and capture that "unknown."

friends to lunch, but one of the guests brings his girl friend and introduces her as his wife. But what will happen when his real wife shows up?

9:00 Variety Show

10:20 The Fourth Arm
Ep. 3

When major Gallagher returns from France, he is given the go-ahead to select and train a team of volunteers whose ultimate goal will be to penetrate the complex, obtain the latest information about the V-weapons and then destroy it.

Wed. — Jan. 21, 1987

8:30 Three's Company

9:10 Doc. — The Africans

The arbitrary colonial boundaries, which spread across the continent, divided some and called others. Within these artificial frontiers the urge to be free from the colonial yoke gained force, and exploded in the Mau Mau rebellion of 1953, which set the wheels in motion for the independence of Kenya.

10:20 Best Seller
Aspen

Thur. — Jan. 22, 1987

8:30 Comedy Series

9:10 Remington Steele
Spring Time for Steele

Remington and Laura become entangled with a singer who is convinced that someone is out to kill her.

10:20 Feature Film
Petal

Starring:
George C. Scott
Julie Christie

A doctor's life is disrupted by his meeting and loving a kooky girl who has family problems.

Fri. — Jan. 23, 1987

8:30 Throb

9:10 Falcon Crest
Carol of the Valley

10:20 Paradise Postponed
Loving is the Past

Henry and Agnes are in L.A. where Agnes becomes increasingly disillusioned with both Hollywood and Henry.

Tue. — Jan. 20, 1987

8:30 Ever Decreasing Circles

Martin and his wife invite some

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Navratilova and Mandlikova advance in Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (Agencies) — Defending champion Martina Navratilova of the United States stayed on course toward her fourth women's singles title Friday in the \$1.65 million Australian Open tennis championships.

She breezed past compatriot Camille Benjamin 6-2, 6-1 in the third-round match at Kooyong.

Navratilova had to conquer not only Benjamin, but a freakish, gusty wind that made life unpleasant for all the players on the fifth day of the tournament.

Second-seeded Hana Mandlikova of Czechoslovakia, the Australian Open champion in 1980, and third-seeded American Pam Shriver also scored straight sets victories to advance to the last 16.

English no. 4 Anne Hobbs upset 15th-seeded Australian Dianne Balestrat.

Navratilova, 30, took less than an hour to overpower former French Open semi-finalist Benjamin, a 20-year-old baseliner, who hit occasional passing shots but lacked the artillery to worry the top seed.

The powerful Czech-born lefthander will face either compatriot Beverly Boves or Australian Janine Thompson in the fourth round.

Mandlikova, winner of the Brisbane Tournament earlier this month, overcame dropping her serve early in the first set to romp home 6-3, 6-2 against experienced but outgunned American Anne Smith.

Shriver, 24, was untroubled in defeating young South African Elna Reinach 6-2, 6-4, while Hobbs, 26, used chip and charge tactics to easily overcome veteran lefthander Balestrat 6-4, 6-2.

Sixth-seeded Bulgarian Manuela Maleeva had to struggle on an outside court before defeating the elegant Hungarian-born Swiss player Cilla Cserepy 6-3, 6-7, 7-5.

In other third-round action on a day dominated by doubles matches, Swede Catarina Lindqvist, the 10th seed, recovered from a slow start to defeat French player Marie-Christine Calleja 4-6, 6-1, 6-3, while vastly experi-

enced West German Sylvia Hanika ousted Akiko Kijimuta of Japan 6-3, 6-3.

Jo Durie, the lanky 14th seed from Britain, eased into the round of 16 and clinched a meeting with Shriver with a 6-1, 6-4 triumph over Austrian baseliner Judith Polzl.

Navratilova said she had seldom felt fresher going into a tournament.

"The conditions were difficult," she said. "It was hard to plan an attack and place the ball."

Shriver echoed Navratilova's comments on the wind.

"You just had to concentrate on every point out there," she said.

Becker wins

Boris Becker produced a

Australia wins test to break losing spell

SYDNEY (R) — Leg spin and the Sydney pitch again proved a winning combination for Australia's cricketers as they emerged from a long lean spell to beat England by 55 runs in a thrilling climax to the fifth and final test.

Where it was the wrist spin of Bob Holland that beguiled New Zealand here more than a year and 15 tests ago, the last time Australia won, on this occasion it was Peter Sleep who took the honours.

His five for 72 included the final act of the series when he clean bowled John Emburey with the last ball of the penultimate over to dismiss England for 264 on Thursday.

Australia's unrestrained joy at

commanding fifth set effort and took just 30 minutes to beat Australian tormentor Brod Dyke 6-7, 6-1, 6-4, 6-7, 6-2 when they resumed play on Thursday at two sets apiece. Dyke beat him in Brussels last year.

Becker also laid to rest the nightmare of a loss to Dutchman Michiel Schapers in his first match in the last Australian Open at the end of 1985.

"That loss was in the back of my mind before this match," Becker said. "But I was not really going crazy on the court, I was just trying, trying, trying."

"Today I told myself he would have to beat me, I was not going to lose."

Third-seeded Noah, renewing his effort to come to terms with grass courts, beat Australian David McPherson 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-3.

Leconte, the fifth seed who was a semi-finalist at Wimbledon and the French Open last year, continued his quest for a spot in the final of a "Grand Slam" event with a 4-6, 7-6, 6-2, 6-3 win over big-hitting American Todd Nelson.



20 TIME CHAMPION: Defending champion Al Faisali convincingly defeated Al Duffstein 2-0 to win Jordan's Premier League title for the twentieth time in its history. The playoff game, played on Friday at Amman Stadium, was forced by a draw between the two teams at the close of the regular season. In the photo, Ibrahim Mustafa, captain of Al Faisali, scores his team's second goal at the 85th minute as Al Duffstein defender, Ra'ed Asef, watches helplessly. Mustafa scored off a pass from the left corner by Jamal Abu Abdi, Al Faisali midfielder. Al Faisali's first goal, off the foot of Khalid Awad, came quickly in the 4th minute of play. Al Faisali will now play Al Arabi, Jordan Cup winner, in the Cup Winners Cup match scheduled for May 1 (Photo by Abu Sinan).

English sports are in deep freeze

LONDON (AP) — The big freeze sweeping across Britain has decimated the nation's sporting programme, with soccer, rugby, horseracing, boxing and greyhound events wiped out because of sub-zero temperatures, ice and snow.

One postponement brought angry demands for compensation from Liverpool, the country's league soccer champion, which had a cup match called off two hours before kickoff.

The Liverpool pitch had been passed fit for the F.A. Cup third round replay, thanks to the club's undersoil heating system. However, opponent Luton Town failed to give itself enough time to reach the north-west port city.

Postponement of the Liverpool-Luton match meant all 19 midweek English F.A. Cup games were called off.

Most were re-arranged for next Monday, Jan. 19, but with weathermen forecasting no immediate end to the Arctic conditions, another spate of cup

postponements seemed likely.

Saturday's full English and Scottish league programmes were another victim of the weather. A stream of postponements began Thursday and officials said almost all the 61 scheduled matches would suffer.

"The prospects are looking bleak," said John Goggins, match secretary of the football league.

The only exceptions were likely to be at the few clubs employing expensive, sophisticated underground heating. These include Everton, Manchester City and standstill leader Arsenal, all of whom have home matches at the weekend.

Everton, four points behind Arsenal in second place, hosts Sheffield Wednesday, while City takes on third-placed Liverpool. Arsenal meets Coventry City in a televised match on Sunday.

Arsenal manager George Graham said it was essential that his club avoid a backlog of matches in its bid to win the First Division title.

"I believe it was a fixture

pile-up that cost West Ham the championship last season and I don't want the same to happen to us," Graham said.

A mid-winter freeze last year meant West Ham had to play 19 games in the last eight weeks of the season. The club eventually wound up in third place.

"In these circumstances, it becomes a test of the resilience of your players," said Graham, whose team is unbeaten in 20 league and cup games. "I'm sure mine are as resilient as any — but I'd rather not put it to the test."

In London, temperatures plummeted earlier this week to minus 8.6 C (plus 16.5 F), the lowest reading on record. One team from the capital, Watford, lined up an exhibition game in Iceland on Saturday to replace its postponed league match against Queens Park Rangers.

While the rest of the European continent has been gripped by cold, Iceland has been enjoying unseasonably spring-like conditions.

Liverpool, meanwhile, prepared for its game at Manchester still locked in a heated debate over Wednesday's postponed cup match against Luton.

Luton hired two executive jets in a bid to beat the freeze but was stranded at Heathrow Airport and now faces a £10,000 (\$15,000) compensation claim from Liverpool for expenses incurred in ensuring that the game went ahead.

"When a match is billed to take place and one of the competing teams does not turn up, there is a responsibility on the part of the F.A. to take some action," said Liverpool chief executive, Peter Robinson.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Goalkeeper dies from match injury

MALAGA, Spain (R) — Malaga goalkeeper Jose Gallardo died from a brain haemorrhage following a head injury suffered during a Spanish Second Division soccer match last December. A hospital statement said Thursday. Gallardo, who was 25, had been in a coma since undergoing an emergency operation eight days ago. He was carried off unconscious during a game against Celta de Vigo on Dec. 21 after an accidental clash with Celta's Brazilian striker Baltazar Morales. After a few days in hospital he was allowed home and appeared to be recovering well until the brain haemorrhage. The last Spanish professional footballer to die as a result of a soccer injury was Sevilla's Pedro Berruero, who suffered a heart attack during a match 14 years ago.

Watford seeks warmer weather in Iceland

LONDON (R) — English First Division Watford is taking an unusual step to beat the freezing weather and keep in shape — the team is flying to Iceland for a game. After this Saturday's home game against Queens Park Rangers was postponed Thursday, Watford took up an invitation to play a Reykjavik select side on a synthetic surface in the Icelandic capital this weekend. Nineteen English League matches have been postponed since Sunday because of heavy snow and sub-zero temperatures.

Bird named AP athlete of year

BOSTON (AP) — Larry Bird, who led the Boston Celtics to their 16th National Basketball Association title and became the first forward to win the league's most valuable player award three consecutive times, is the Associated Press male athlete of 1986. Bird outpolled fellow Boston athlete Roger Clemens, who was 24-4 en route to helping the Red Sox win the American League baseball pennant, and undefeated boxer Mike Tyson, who became the youngest world heavyweight champion. Bird, the first basketball player to win the award since it was started in 1931, was named on 60 of the 95 ballots received from a nationwide group of U.S. sports writers and sportscasters.

Swedish ice rink melts from cold

STOCKHOLM (R) — An ice hockey match had to be called off in Sweden because the ice rink melted, despite the fact that the country is suffering its coldest weather for decades, sports officials said. An embarrassed official said the cold weather was believed to have caused a malfunction in the equipment that kept the ice frozen in the indoor rink in central Sweden. About 1,000 disappointed spectators who turned up to watch the national league match between Mjölby south and Gäddede Wednesday night had to leave the hall when the ice melted down to the rink's concrete base.

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Kabul's peace moves get cool reception in Pakistan

Afghan officials display captured Stinger

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghanistan's latest moves in its well-advertised new year peace offensive have had a cool reception in neighbouring Pakistan.

Afghan rebels based across the border greeted the unilateral ceasefire Thursday of Afghanistan leader Najibullah with a spate of attacks on government posts, guerrilla sources said.

Pakistani officials were likewise cool about Mr. Najibullah's announcement that his government had reached agreements with the Kremlin paving the way for a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

The officials said the announcement to a large gathering in Kabul Thursday took the matter little further and apparently was aimed mainly at making a publicity impact.

The main Pakistan-based rebel alliance declined comment on the announcement pending a public meeting due to be addressed by all seven party leaders in their main base city of Peshawar on Saturday.

But alliance spokesman Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi told Reuters that three days of talks of the often deeply divided grouping had ended with complete unity.

The rebel chiefs have already rejected the ceasefire and pledged to continue their eight-year-old

struggle until the departure of Soviet forces, estimated by the West at 115,000 men.

The point was pressed home by the unusual speed with which Thursday's clashes were reported to Peshawar, just over the border from the Afghanistan border.

The sources said that at least five attacks were made on Soviet posts in the two Afghan provinces closest to the Pakistani city, while three soldiers were killed near the Khyber Pass near Peshawar.

Mr. Najibullah said that all government troops had been ordered to cease offensive actions from midnight on Wednesday, but promised quick retaliation if the rebels continued fighting.

The Afghan government showed foreign reporters an ultra-modern U.S.-made Stinger missile which officials said had been captured from Afghan rebels in the past two weeks.

Defence Minister Mohammad Rafie said it was one of two such weapons and a British-made Blowpipe missile captured by the army in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province.

The Blowpipe was also displayed at the news conference, held at the Afghan Foreign

Ministry for a party of Moscow-based foreign correspondents.

"These missiles prove that the U.S. and Britain are directly participating in aggression against our country," Gen. Rafie said.

Gen. Rafie said that the Stinger — a shoulder-held, heat-seeking missile — was a top secret weapon that the United States had not sold to any foreign country.

"But the Americans have provided it to the counter-revolutionaries as you can see," Gen. Rafie declared.

The Blowpipe had been captured from the same rebel group, he said. Other Blowpipes had been captured from Afghan guerrillas last summer.

The supply of the Stinger, Gen. Rafie added, "shows that despite its professions that it wants peace, the Reagan administration is doing all it can to prevent peace" coming to Afghanistan.

"It is providing the counter-revolutionaries with the most modern weapons so that they can continue the bloody fratricidal war," he said.

The Stinger is made by Atlantic Research Corporation. The tube is made by the G.E.C. company. Markings of the two firms were on the dismantled weapons produced at the news conference.

Speaking on the first day of a government-proclaimed

ceasefire, Mr. Najibullah also offered an amnesty to military deserters as part of his campaign to end the eight-year-old civil war between government forces and Muslim rebels.

Mr. Najibullah was addressing a congress of the National Fatherland Front, a pro-government umbrella organisation. He cautioned that future moves by Moscow and Kabul would depend directly on the rebel response to his national unity drive.

Front Chairman Abdurrahman Hafate told delegates at the congress reports of ceasefire violations by the guerrillas had come in from the Khost region near the Pakistani border.

Asked by Mr. Hafate whether government forces should take immediate action or wait before responding, dozens of delegates shouted: "Go for them, go for them."

Renewing his appeal to some five million Afghan refugees to return home, Mr. Najibullah said they would receive resettlement grants.

In Washington the White House Thursday dismissed the proposed withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan as a propaganda ploy and urged an immediate, unconditional end to Moscow's occupation of the country.

London appoints new Hong Kong governor

LONDON (R) — Britain Friday named career diplomat and Mandarin scholar David Wilson as the new governor and commander-in-chief of Hong Kong.

The Foreign Office said Queen Elizabeth had approved Mr. Wilson's appointment as successor to Sir Edward Youde, who died of a heart attack in December.

Sir Wilson, 51, played a key role in negotiating the 1984 agreement for the transfer of the colony of 5.5 million people to China and is regarded as one of Britain's leading Chinese experts.

The queen also approved Sir Wilson's appointment as Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, meaning that the new governor will be styled Sir David Wilson.

A Foreign Office career diplomat, who has taken time off to climb mountains and for post-graduate study at London, Hong Kong and Columbia universities, Sir Wilson has spent most of his working life involved with China and the neighbouring British colony.

A Scot, he wins praise from

diplomats and climbers alike. Colleagues say he is a hard task master and an able administrator. The climbers say he's got what it takes.

"I can't think of a better bloke to be governor of Hong Kong. He's an immensely impressive man, physically very tough and yet at the same time very sensitive," British explorer Chris Bonington said.

Sir Wilson accompanied Bonington in 1981 as interpreter and support climber on the only expedition to date that has succeeded in scaling the 7,719-metre (25,300-foot) Kongur Shan in China's western Sinciang province.

"He's very steady and efficient. The kind you can always rely on," Bonington said.

"It's wonderful to see someone so fresh and dynamic getting such a job," the British explorer added.

Until his new appointment, Sir Wilson was assistant under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office in charge of the Far Eastern Department. He was also the senior British representative on the joint liaison team supervising the arrangements for the hand-over of Hong Kong.

Indian security forces stage 'mock' hijacking

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian commandos posing as Sikh extremists Friday staged a mock hijack of a chartered domestic airliner with nearly 100 passengers to test security, triggering nationwide confusion and fears a real hijack was underway, government officials said.

Hours after a senior government spokesman insisted that the commandeering of an Indian Airlines Boeing 737 was a security exercise some airline staff believed a real hijack was in progress.

An Aviation Ministry spokesman said the passengers were not genuine travellers but security personnel and civil servants.

An Indian Airlines spokesman said he did not have a passenger manifest.

Airports and police all over the country went on alert after reports that four men armed with sub-machine guns and hand grenades had hijacked the plane after it took off from the western city of Udaipur.

The airliner, which one official said had been chartered by the Indian government, left from New

Delhi at 6.20 a.m. (0050 GMT) for Bombay via Udaipur and Ahmedabad.

The hijackers diverted it to Aurangabad, north of Bombay, where it landed safely.

Government spokesman Ram Mohan Rao told Reuters the hijacking was an exercise "to find out the effectiveness of the security system," and test the reflexes of anti-hijack squads.

News agencies reported the plane parked at the end of the runway at Aurangabad Airport which was closed. Reporters were not allowed near it.

In a separate development Indian President Zail Singh has taken the unprecedented step of withholding his assent to a government bill which would allow authorities to open private mail.

A government spokesman said Mr. Singh, whose five-year term ends this year, returned the Indian Postal Act (amendment) bill without signing it.

Newspapers said Mr. Singh, 71, asked the government to review and modify the bill which opposition parties have denounced as a draconian measure.

Ten killed in mid-air collision over Utah

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (R) — A commuter plane and a small private aircraft collided over Salt Lake City, killing all 10 occupants and showering debris on houses, police said.

An 18-seat Skywest commuter plane was approaching Salt Lake City International Airport with 16 passengers and a crew of two on board when the collision occurred at 2,300 metres, airline officials said Thursday.

Two people on a private plane, said by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials to

have been practising landings at a private airport on the opposite side of the city, were also killed in the collision, police said.

A wing crashed through a ceiling of one of the three houses damaged in the Salt Lake City suburb of Kearns, 16 kilometres south of the city centre, and a fuel tank embedded itself in a roof.

But no one on the ground was injured, fire marshal Frank Brown said.

Bodies still strapped to aircraft seats were found in snowdrifts in a field.

Crash victims survive for 22 hours in Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Six people injured in the crash of a small plane survived a night of sub-zero cold on a snowy mountain pass by huddling in the wreckage and burning aviation fuel, but a baby who had been aboard died. The three men and three women were rescued Thursday morning, 22 hours after the single-engine Cessna on a 320-kilometre charter flight from Anchorage to Nondalton went down in blinding snow and clouds about 100 kilometres west of Anchorage.

"We laid blankets over

everybody so we could keep them warm so they wouldn't start getting hypothermia. People were in a lot of pain. They were screaming," passenger John Kuczmarski, 22, said Thursday.

Pilot Fred Simms of Anchorage started a fire with fuel. The plane's wings, tail and nose had been shorted off, but the fuselage shielded them from the wind, Kuczmarski said.

Two women in the rear of the plane couldn't join the others because their feet were caught in the seats, Kuczmarski said. They huddled under a sleeping bag.

Filipino army shells rebels

COTABATO, Philippines (R) — Army gunners unleashed artillery fire against Muslim rebel positions under cover of darkness early Friday as the worst outbreak of Muslim-related violence in a decade killed 30 and wounded 57, the army said.

In Manila, presidential adviser Aquilino Pimentel announced President Corason Aquino would push through with her planned weekend visit to Cotabato and five other cities in troubled Mindanao Island.

He was expected to fly later Friday to Mindanao with the president's sister-in-law, Margarita Cojuangco, in hopes of talking with rebel leaders.

Armed Forces Chief Gen. Fidel Ramos told reporters after

meeting Mrs. Aquino that "she will be taking some risks in proceeding to Cotabato ... but the military can take appropriate action" to keep her safe.

Mrs. Aquino met Gen. Ramos and other advisers hours after army troops broke up rebel concentrations with a barrage that sent 105-mm shells crashing through the darkness into Muslim positions outside Cotabato city.

Soldiers meanwhile foiled a bid by 300 guerrillas to blow up Mindanao State University and other government buildings in Marawi city at dawn.

An army concentration of 750 soldiers, two tanks and seven armoured cars frightened away the guerrillas, who were surrounding the university.

COLUMNS 7 & 8

Qatar reports six AIDS victims die

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Six of eight AIDS victims reported in Qatar have died, the health ministry has disclosed. Qatar's undersecretary of health, Ahmed Hajar, told a news conference the cases of acquired immune deficiency included five women, two men and a child. He said the only survivors were an Arab woman being treated at Doha's Hamad Hospital and a Qatari child being treated abroad. Dr. Hajar attributed the cases to blood transfusions except for a European victim among the group. He did not identify the victim further. The other fatalities were four non-Qatari Arab women and a Qatari man, he said. The first case was discovered in 1985 and transfusions had been administered both in Doha and abroad in Europe or India, he said. He reported extensive precautionary measures, including multi-million-dollar equipment to check people who underwent medical treatment abroad. A few cases of AIDS have been reported in other countries in the oil-rich Gulf region. Most were attributed to infected blood used in transfusions or to European carriers.

Thais offer free exotic disease checks

BANGKOK (R) — Thailand will offer free medical checks for venereal disease to tourists and prostitutes during the current "visit Thailand year," public health officials have said. They said medical teams were already visiting brothels to give prostitutes free blood tests. Tourists can have free blood tests at venereal disease clinics. Bangkok has about 120 massage parlours, 95 registered girls bars and night clubs and numerous "tea houses" and a reputation for cheap and easy sex. Thailand hopes to attract nearly three million visitors during the "visit Thailand year" tourist promotion campaign.

More sterilised women ask for reversal

LONDON (R) — A growing number of sterilised women are asking for a reversal operation, the British Medical Journal said in its latest edition. "Every patient who requests sterilisation is told that the effect of the operation is permanent, but most patients know that this is not always true — and requests for reversal are increasing," the magazine said. It said that of the more than 60 million women worldwide who had been sterilised 10 per cent expressed regret afterwards and between 0.1 per cent and 0.5 per cent asked for reversal. The journal said the success rate in reversal operations had greatly increased with the new method of laparoscopic sterilisation, which entails the application of clips to the fallopian tubes rather than more destructive methods such as the so-called "cut and tie."

Liz Taylor launches perfume

NEW YORK (R) — Actress Elizabeth Taylor has held a news conference to announce she is launching her own line of perfume, that some profits will go to AIDS research — and no, she is not engaged to marry George Hamilton. The New York press was there in force for what had been billed as a "top secret." It turned out to be a promotion for the perfume, but many of the questions had to do with her friendship with Hamilton. "I am very fond of George," she said when asked if she intended making the 47-year old U.S. actor her seventh husband. Miss Taylor, 54, was photographed at London's Heathrow airport with Hamilton, her constant companion, pushing her in a wheelchair. She said she had hurt her knee skidding in Switzerland. "We don't have any plans to marry. We are very happy as we are. Why do anything to mess it up?" she was quoted as saying before flying to the United States.

Man eats coins and nails

BRESCIA, Italy (AP) — A 23-year-old unemployed man has swallowed 50 coins and 30 nails in what hospital officials described as an attempt "to assure himself a warm bed and food." Doctors at Brescia civil hospital in this northern Italian town used laxatives and other treatment to rid the man of the metal pieces, said the officials who asked not to be identified. It was not the first time that the man, identified only as Pasqual P., had consumed non-edible substances to stay in the hospital, they said. Earlier this year he was admitted to the hospital after having eaten a large dose of cough drops and was treated but when the time came for discharge, he closed himself in the bathroom and swallowed his watch, the officials said.

Drunk driver convicted for 58th time

STOCKHOLM (R) — A Swedish court has jailed a 52-year-old man for six months after convicting him for his 58th drink-driving offence. Court officials in Alingsas, central Sweden, said the man, who has already served a total of four-and-a-half years in prison for driving with excess alcohol, was convicted for having more than twice the permitted amount of alcohol in his blood. He told the court he hoped to get professional help to stop his drinking, which first landed him in trouble in 1957. Sweden has some of the toughest drink-driving laws in the world, with one glass of wine or beer being sufficient to break the legal barrier. Higher blood alcohol levels are nearly always punished with jail sentences.

Comedy star of early Soviet cinema dies

MOSCOW (R) — Igor Ilinsky, a comedy star of the early Soviet cinema, has died at the age of 86. TASS news agency has reported. Ilinsky, who liked the role of the stupid bureaucrat, appeared in silent movies in the 1920s and later black and white sound films such as "Volga, Volga," in which he played a river station manager trying to install a telephone. He also made a name as a serious actor and poetry reader at Moscow's Maly Theatre and was awarded the title of People's Artist of the Soviet Union in 1949.

61 Picassos stranded by snow

MADRID (R) — A truck carrying 61 Picassos worth a total of \$24 million was stranded by snow in the central Spanish town of Guadalajara on Jan. 15, the director of Madrid's Museum of Contemporary Art said. "The pictures are perfectly safe as the convoy has the normal air conditioning for this sort of transport," said the official, Aurelio Torrente. He said Spanish civil guards were escorting the convoy. The works were from the private collection of Picasso's French widow, Jacqueline, who committed suicide shortly before the exhibition opened at the Madrid museum last October. He said Jacqueline telephoned him the night before she shot herself to say that she wanted the pictures and sculptures to stay in Picasso's native Spain. But the government decided to return them to France because of the lack of written evidence of her wishes.

Man sentenced 25 years after slaying

SALINAS, California (R) — A 55-year-old former ranch hand was sentenced to life imprisonment for the slaying of a teen-aged girl nearly 25 years ago for which he was once sentenced to die. Booker Hillery, whose previous sentence was commuted, was released from prison last year when a new trial was ordered. He will be eligible for immediate parole because of the time he already has served. Hillery's earlier conviction for killing Mariene Miller with a pair of scissors in 1962 was overturned by the U.S. supreme court. The court said blacks had been systematically excluded from the jury at his first trial. Hillery is black.

Soviets announce troop withdrawal from Mongolia

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union has made a fresh overture to Asia and particularly to China by announcing that it will withdraw a division of its troops from Mongolia in the spring.

In Afghanistan, where the presence of Soviet forces poses a barrier to better Sino-Soviet relations, an Afghan-Soviet accord has been announced paving the way for their withdrawal.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov told reporters Thursday that a motorised division plus a number of other troops would be pulled out of Mongolia, a Soviet ally on the border with China, between April and June this year.

Western military experts said this meant some 8,000 to 11,000 men would probably be brought home from an estimated 75,000-man Soviet contingent stationed in Mongolia since 1966.

The number of Soviet troops on the Chinese border is one of three obstacles cited by Peking to warmer political ties with Moscow.

Western analysts said the Kremlin, seeking to improve

relations, was clearly making another gesture to China with the latest announcement.

Mr. Gerasimov said the decision was in line with a new policy to promote Asian security outlined by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev in a speech from the Far Eastern Soviet port of Vladivostok last year.

TASS news agency reported from the Mongolian capital of Ulan Bator that the government there regarded the decision as an "act of goodwill which will strengthen mutual understanding and trust and good-neighbourly ties between Asian peoples."

But the analysts in Moscow noted that Peking was far more concerned about the estimated one million Soviet troops on the Sino-Soviet border.

It was also unwilling to advance beyond recent improvements in Sino-Soviet economic relations as long as Moscow continued to back its ally Vietnam on Kampuchea, they said.

China, as well as the United States and Pakistan, have given a lukewarm response to peace initiatives for Afghanistan currently being publicised by Moscow and Kabul.

Death toll reaches 212 in Europe's big freeze

LONDON (AP) — Freezing weather in Europe has claimed more than 200 lives from Spain to the Soviet Union and shows little sign of easing, and is reported to have caused power cuts in three Eastern Bloc countries.

The British Broadcasting Corp. said Friday there had been power cuts in Hungary, Poland and East Germany, where it said the army was helping to maintain coal supplies to power stations.

In Czechoslovakia, ice has closed the River Danube to all navigation while in West Germany army engineers used explosives Thursday to blow up ice flows in the River Elbe near Hamburg. The ice flows had been blocking the flow of water in the river, causing it to rise and threaten the homes of 15,000 people in the area.

In France, troops blasted channels through ice on the Loire River to let cooling water reach nuclear power stations at Chinon and St. Laurent Des Eaux, 280 kilometres south west of Paris.

Snow emergencies were declared in a region of southern France, around Marseilles, and in part of northern Italy.

In Britain, temperatures in parts of the north edged below freezing for the first time since Sunday. But in the east and the south east, the worst-hit areas, the bitter cold continued, accompanied by strong winds which caused snowdrifts, and travel by road and rail often proved impossible.

Associated Press bureaus around Europe reported 212 confirmed weather-related deaths by early Friday.

The executive commission of the 12-nation European Community said Thursday it had allotted \$2.75 million to help those at greatest risk from the bitter cold — the old, poor and homeless. The cash will go to

voluntary organisations running emergency aid programmes.

In Paris, subway stations have been opened at night as emergency shelters for the estimated 15,000 homeless.

But in Britain, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government on Thursday ruled against opening London subway stations as shelters for the city's homeless population, estimated at between 25,000 and 40,000.

Hundreds of homeless who nightly sleep huddled in cardboard boxes on the sidewalk under railroad arches near London's embankment subway station were there again Thursday night in sub-freezing weather.

London newspapers on Friday printed pictures of homeless people, young and old, spending the night sitting or lying on the pews in St. James' Church.

In the county of Kent in south east England, troops on Thursday rescued 150 passengers trapped in a snowbound train. In the north, a man survived 39 hours trapped in a his car under snowdrift.

Mrs. Thatcher rejected a legislator's call for Kent to be declared an emergency area but said she would see whether more could be done to get food and other supplies to isolated communities.

In West Germany, barges were ripped from their moorings: near Bremen by pack ice and one hit a navy training vessel.

Meanwhile ten workers were killed and 47 others injured when the roof of a hall at a factory in north western Romania caved in under the weight of heavy snow, the Communist Party daily Scinteia reported Friday.

Shuttle commander: 1988 launch must be successful

JOHNSON SPACE CENTRE (R) — The commander of the first crew U.S. astronaut set to return to space since the Challenger disaster has said that a serious mishap with the next shuttle mission would end the U.S. manned space flight programme.

"The manned space programme depends heavily on our upcoming success," Astronaut Rick Hauck told reporters at the first news conference held since the five-man crew was announced. "If we have another accident, it's over."

Hauck, 45, a veteran of two previous shuttle missions, was chosen to command the shuttle Discovery on its scheduled launch date of Feb. 18, 1988.

Hauck and the other astronauts assigned to the Discovery flight expected the Feb. 18 date as "optimistic."

If necessary it would be delayed to complete engineering modifications to ensure the crew's safety, they said.

Engineers with Morton-Thiokol, the manufacturer of the solid rocket booster, are designing and testing new rocket O-ring

seals on the solid booster rocket that can withstand low temperatures and seal the rocket joints more securely.

"We may have trouble making that schedule. It's going to be very difficult," Hauck said.

The manned mission would be the first since the shuttle Challenger exploded in a ball of fire 73 seconds after liftoff, killing all seven astronauts aboard.

A federal investigation determined that the fatal Jan. 28, 1986, explosion was caused by gases escaping from a faulty O-ring seal.

The main mission of the planned four-day Discovery flight will be to deploy a NASA satellite needed to help NASA technicians on earth track future shuttle flights.

Discovery pilot Richard Covey, 40, who flew on the shuttle two years ago, said he believed the next mission would be the safest ever.

"I think this is a positive turning point in the manned space flight programme. I think we're going to do business much better in the future," Covey said.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OMAR SHARIF
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ653 ♥3 ○3 ♠AK8762
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 NT Pass ? Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—So far you have shown a good hand with at least six clubs and five spades. Despite that, partner has insisted on playing in three no trump rather than choosing one of your suits. Since he knows more about your hand than you do about his, it would be folly to overrule him. Pass.

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠J8 ♥AKJ63 ○72 ♠AKJ5
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♥ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—Just because you have a good hand doesn't mean you have to commit your side to a minus position. On this auction, partner could have a very weak hand with only a doubler heart. Still, you can't pass. The only sensible action is to invite game with a bid of three hearts.

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q76 ♥33 ○KQ762 ♠J102
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♥ Pass
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♥ Pass ? Pass

What action do you take?
A.—While North should have a better than minimum hand, it is unlikely that your side has enough for game, especially in a minor suit. Therefore, the prudent course is to pass. However, if you feel you must bid again, two spades or three diamonds are the obvious choices. We have a slight preference for the former.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AKJ98 ♥K6 ○76322 ♠92
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?
A.—You have a good hand, but partner has already taken that into account with his balancing bid. He had held a reasonable hand, he would have reopened with a double. Don't punish him for refusing to let the opponents buy the hand at one no trump. Pass.

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠J10762 ♥KQ ○AQ753 ♠7
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Dble Rdbld 2 ♠ ?

What action do you take?
A.—Partner's redouble is a request that you allow him the opportunity for a low-level penalty double. Here, however, you do not really want to defend two clubs doubled—your hand is more suited to offense than defense. You can get this message across to partner by passing now, intending to pull a double to two diamonds to show a weak distributional hand.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q1076 ♥AJ982 ○A9 ♠K10
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♥ Pass
2 ♥ Pass ? Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—Obviously, it is a choice between a rebid of two hearts and two no trump. Your hand is slightly offshape for no trump and your prime controls also suggest a suit contract. Bid two hearts to see what partner intends doing next. In an auction where partner has stolen your bidding space, a rebid of your major suit doesn't promise more than a weak five-card suit.